

JAN 5-24

PRAYER

20.20

©2020 Crossroads Church
www.MyCrossroadsChurch.com

The church that I see is so life-giving and full of the Holy Spirit, that people are drawn from every direction, every walk of life, every race, ethnicity and generation in order to encounter the Presence of God. The church that I see is a colorful, vibrant representation of heaven!

THE CHURCH THAT I SEE
Pastor Christina Lowery, October 2019

DAY 1 – JANUARY 5

*I have come that they may **have life and have it to the full.***

| JOHN 10:10

Jesus came so that you would have abundant LIFE! This means that His purpose and mission is to make you FULLY alive in Him! He longs for you to engage with His presence on a daily basis. The more you experience His Presence, the more fully alive you will become! Are you fully alive today? If your answer is no, then perhaps you need more of His Presence!

The Greek word for *life* in this passage is *zoe*. *Zoe* life comes directly from God himself. The life that Jesus came to give us is real and genuine. It is active and vigorous. It is everything we need to thrive in this life, both in good times and bad.

How can you experience his Presence today? It's really quite simple. Invite Him to come.

PRAYER PROMPT:

*Spend the next 20 minutes or so in prayer. Invite the Presence of the Holy Spirit to come and fill you with his *zoe* life. You can start by praying these 3 words: "Holy Spirit, Come."*

So often, we come to God seeking His hands — what we need Him to give us. But today, let's seek His face. You know what will get his attention? Worship. Tell Him that you love Him. Tell Him why you love Him. Thank Him for what He's done for you. Invite His presence into your day.

DAY 2 – JANUARY 6

*I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will **overflow** with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.*

| ROMANS 20:13

What would happen if you were to put an empty container under running water in the kitchen sink? Unless the water is turned off, the container would overflow, right?

Did you know that our soul is like a container that can be filled up with the hope, joy and peace of God's presence at any time? Unlike a kitchen sink, the flow of God's presence never ends and is always pouring out. There is no turn-off valve with God. He is like a river with no ending. He is infinite.

If your container is empty and dry today, could it be that you have not placed yourself into the flow of His Presence lately? He wants to fill you and keep you so full of His Presence that He overflows out of you! Why would he want you to overflow? Because His Presence isn't just for you...it's also for everyone around you!

Imagine being so full of the Holy Spirit that you give life away, everywhere you go! That can be your reality today — just step under the flow of His Presence!

PRAYER PROMPT: *Spend the next 20 minutes or so in prayer. Invite the Presence of the Holy Spirit to come and fill you to overflowing. You can start by praying these 3 words: “Holy Spirit, Come.”*

Then take Romans 15:13 (above) and personalize it. (i.e: “God, you are my source of hope, so fill me completely today with Your joy and your peace. I choose to trust you today. Fill me to overflowing....”)

DAY 3 – JANUARY 7

*And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will **draw everyone to myself.*** | JOHN 12:32

This is one of those loaded statements that Jesus made during his time on earth. He's speaking to his disciples about his death and departure from the earth. I'm sure it was confusing to the disciples, because if He would soon be absent, how could He draw everyone to Himself?

Well later on in John 16:7, Jesus further explains: *“It is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate (Comforter, Encourager & Counselor) won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you.*

The human form of Jesus is no longer present on this earth, but the good news is, it's better that we have His Spirit instead! One man could not draw everyone to Himself — but His Spirit, in US can!

Like we learned yesterday, He fills us, not just to draw us closer to Him, but to draw *everyone closer to Him!* So if His Spirit dwells in you, people *will* be drawn to Him! They will ask you questions like, “What's different about you?” “Why do you always seem to have peace when it's so stressful here in the workplace?” “How are you coping with the tragedy that you're facing right now? You seem so strong!”

People will see the Spirit of Christ in you! So today, continue (or start) to invite His Presence into your thoughts, your words, your actions and watch how people will be drawn to Him!

PRAYER PROMPT: *Spend the next 20 minutes or so in prayer. Invite the Presence of the Holy Spirit to come and fill you to overflowing. You can start by praying these 3 words: “Holy Spirit, Come.”*

Think about a couple of people in your life who are stressed out, full of anxiety, depressed, angry, facing difficult situations, etc. Don't just pray for them, ask God how His Spirit in you wants to work in their lives. Ask God to fill you so that you can minister to them with kind words and acts of service. Perhaps God would have you pray for them. When they tell you their problems, your first response should be, “Can I pray for you right now?” 99% of the time, they will say “yes.” So ask God to give you the courage to take that step and give you a direct word from Him to share with them.

DAY 4 - JANUARY 8

For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. All who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.
| GALATIANS 3:28

This is a very important verse in scripture! The Apostle Paul is essentially saying that once we have “put on Christ” – our new identity IS Christ. Our identity is no longer based on our ethnic decent, our place in society or even our gender. Even in our distinctions, we become one in Christ – children of God. Does this change who we are and what we look like? Of course not! We are all still richly diverse (He made us that way!) – yet in our diversity, we all wear the same thing: CHRIST. Essentially, this is what the Kingdom of God looks like – a colorful, vibrant, diverse representation of heaven on earth!

Let’s put this into context with what we learned yesterday. The Spirit of God is drawing *everyone* to Him - every language, every skin color, every demographic... everyone. *This* is the kind of Kingdom that He is building.

Here’s a paradigm shift for us today — The Kingdom of God does not look, act or speak just like you. The Kingdom of God draws everyone in the world who is different from you!

Today, how can you extend an invitation of the Kingdom of God – the family of God to someone who doesn’t look like you, think like you, or even believe like you? The Spirit of God in you is

longing to draw them to Himself. Will you allow Him to use you in this way?

PRAYER PROMPT: *Spend the next 20 minutes or so in prayer. Invite the Presence of the Holy Spirit to come and fill you to overflowing. You can start by praying these 3 words: “Holy Spirit, Come.”*

Think about the people around you – maybe in your workplace, at your gym or the grocery store you frequent. Think of someone in your life, but not in your inner circle of people just like you. Ask God how His Spirit in you wants to work in their lives. Ask God to fill you so that you can reach out to them in a way that will demonstrate his kindness, His love, His welcome and inclusion. Perhaps you can invite them out for coffee, over to your house for dinner, or to sit with you at church on Sunday.

I see a church where God's Presence isn't associated with a building, or a location — but with its *people*, who carry His Presence everywhere they go. His Presence is their identity and their reputation. Love, compassion, grace, healing and freedom are in their hands and they are known for being radically generous with what they've been given.

THE CHURCH THAT I SEE
Pastor Christina Lowery, October 2019

DAY 5 – JANUARY 9

Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God?

| 1 CORINTHIANS 6:19

This scripture is yet another beautiful picture of the Presence of God, Holy Spirit, living inside of us. We are a temple. In other words, we are the House of God - the place where He dwells. There are many implications to this scripture, but the one I want to hit on today is this: you and I are a walking, talking, breathing house of God. Everywhere we go, we take His Presence with us.

Contrary to popular belief, church is not the building we worship in...it's the place where God dwells: in US! In fact, when New Testament writers use the word "church" – they are not referring to a building where God dwells, but to a group of people in which He dwells! The Greek word for church is *ekklesia*. Ekklesia means, *a gathering of people united by common identity and purpose*.

What if the people in our city and community didn't associate church with a building or a location – but with you and I, the *people* who carry the Presence of God? What if His Presence was not only our identity, but our reputation? What if we were not only marked by God, but we freely expressed the fruit and gifts of His Spirit...that when people interact with us – they have interacted with God Himself?

God doesn't want to be known for a building. He wants to be known for who He is – and He wants to use US, the temple of His Spirit to demonstrate his character and heart to the world!

PRAYER PROMPT: *Spend the next 20 minutes or so in prayer. Invite the Presence of the Holy Spirit to come and fill you to overflowing. You can start by praying these 3 words: “Holy Spirit, Come.”*

Take some time to acknowledge to yourself and to God that YOU are His temple. He lives in you. Have you given Him much room to live there? Is there anything that also lives in you that may be cramping His space? Perhaps it's times for a house cleaning. Talk it out with God. As you make room for Him today, ask Him to make His Presence in you more evident to others around you.

DAY 6 – JANUARY 10

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. | GALATIANS 5:22-23

You can always tell when someone is full of the Holy Spirit because of the fruit that is being produced in their lives.

In a tangible sense, fruit is the sweet product of a tree or plant that contains seeds and can be eaten as food. Not only is fruit to be enjoyed, it often carries the seed that will eventually reproduce and multiply to bring us more fruit.

In a spiritual sense, the fruit of the Spirit in our lives is very much the same — it is the sweet and enjoyable display of God’s life in us! It can be seen by others – especially in times when these qualities make no sense.

- *How can she love so well, even after being betrayed?*
- *How is this family so full of joy, even after losing a loved one?*
- *How is he able to maintain his peace and be so patient in such a hostile work environment?*
- *How are they so kind to those horrible, grumpy neighbors?*
- *How did she keep her composure after the boss talked to her like that?*

Get the point? God’s character is so counterculture to the way the world handles conflict and difficulty – so when the Holy Spirit produces the fruit of His character in our lives, people will take notice! They will taste and see of His goodness — and before you

know it, seeds will be planted in their lives that will be reproduced in them!

PRAYER PROMPT: *Spend the next 20 minutes or so in prayer. Invite the Presence of the Holy Spirit to come and fill you to overflowing. You can start by praying these 3 words: “Holy Spirit, Come.”*

Re-read Galatians 5:22-23 and turn it into a prayer. Ask God that He would grow and develop the fruit of His Spirit in your life so that it's not only evident, but that people can taste and enjoy His Spirit through you. Think about specific situations or relationships where His fruit in you needs to grow.

DAY 7 - JANUARY 11

³⁰ Jesus replied with a story: “A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road.

³¹ “By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. ³² A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.

³³ “Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. ³⁴ Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, ‘Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I’ll pay you the next time I’m here.’

³⁶ “Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?” Jesus asked. ³⁷ The man replied, “The one who showed him mercy.” Then Jesus said, “Yes, **now go and do the same.**” | ACTS 2:45,47

Jesus tells us to go and do the same as the “despised” Samaritan did. What did he do? He stepped over the cultural barriers and prejudice of his day, and not only was he compassionate, he *felt compassion*. He opened up his heart, he showed mercy and extended grace to someone that would have been counted as his public enemy. He cared for this wounded and abandoned man the way he would want to be cared for if he found himself in the same predicament.

Today, Jesus is telling us, “now go and do the same.” Today, let’s love our neighbors (especially the ones nobody else loves) — just as the Samaritan did. Let’s love anyone and everyone around us who need the love, grace and mercy of God. Do it for them, just as you would for yourself. Everything that Jesus has done for you, go and do the same. Healing, grace, freedom, love, compassion, and mercy are all in your hands. Go deliver some good news to someone who needs it!

PRAYER PROMPT: *Spend the next 20 minutes or so in prayer. Invite the Presence of the Holy Spirit to come and fill you to overflowing. You can start by praying these 3 words: “Holy Spirit, Come.”*

Who do you feel you relate to the most in this parable? The High Priest, the Temple Assistant, or the Good Samaritan? Be honest with God. Have you overlooked those who have been abused, abandoned, or in need? As God to give you eyes to see those around you who could use His love, grace and mercy through you and then, “go and do the same.”

I see a church that is growing so fast, our building struggles to contain the increase. I see a church that breaks through its walls and expands outward from what we've known. Larger facilities. More facilities. Campuses along the I95 corridor from Richmond to Fairfax and beyond.

THE CHURCH THAT I SEE
Pastor Christina Lowery, October 2019

DAY 8 - JANUARY 12

All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals, and to prayer. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved. | ACTS 2:45,47

There is something powerful that happens here in this passage. I love how Dr. Luke, the writer of this book, infers that as the believers of the early church devoted themselves to the teaching of their pastors (apostles), served and supported each other in love, and as they continued to pray together, more people got saved.

We can learn a lot from the church in Acts! What we can see here in Acts 2 is God blessing the good stewardship of His church! The Lord gave them apostles and pastors to teach them – and the church responded with devotion. They responded to their pastors with a heart of teachability, with love, loyalty and enthusiasm. And God blessed them with more people to teach, who got saved every day.

The early church was full of Jews and Gentiles, men and women, rich and poor, slave and free – and yet even in their diversity, they were devoted to fellowshiping with each other, and sharing meals together. And God blessed them with more people to love and share with, and serve – and they were getting saved every day.

The church in Acts was devoted to prayer. They prayed with each other and for each other. They prayed for healing, for freedom, for provision, and protection. They didn't pray once and forget

about it, they kept praying in faith until God answered them! And God blessed them with more people to pray for, who got saved every day.

This is the church we were meant to be! If we can develop a teachable spirit that responds to the teaching of God's Word with devotion and obedience, if we can increase in love and support and fellowship with each other, if we can pray regularly with and for each other — God WILL add to our fellowship those who will be saved! Yes Lord!

PRAYER PROMPT:

Spend the next 20 minutes or so in prayer. Invite the Presence of the Holy Spirit to come and fill you to overflowing. You can start by praying these 3 words: "Holy Spirit, Come."

Ask the Holy Spirit how he would have you respond, not just in prayer, but in action. Have you been devoted to the teaching of your pastor? Have you been devoted to loving and serving others in your faith community? Are you devoted to prayer? Pray for your church now, and if you don't have a church, pray that God would lead you to a community that is devoted to teaching, fellowship and prayer!

DAY 9 - JANUARY 13

*Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, “Oh, that you would bless me and **enlarge my territory!** Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.” And God granted his request. | 1 CHRONICLES 4:10 (NIV)*

Jabez was an honorable man, (see *1 Chronicles 4:9*) who prayed honorable prayers, and God granted his request. His prayers were pleasing to God – not because of the words he prayed, but the heart and motive from which he prayed them. The prayer of Jabez is not a formula. Saying the same words that Jabez prayed will not magically deliver blessing, increased territory and freedom from harm and pain.

God told the prophet Samuel, “*People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.*” (*1 Samuel 16:7*.) Words are just an aspect of our outward appearance, and they do not impress God. What impresses God is the heart from which our prayers come from. It’s when He sees honor (towards Him and towards others) in our hearts that he will grant our requests.

What if we prayed the prayer of Jabez with an honorable heart today? What if we didn’t just pray a prayer to be blessed and to have a larger territory (in finances or influence, etc) — but we prayed from a place that honors God and others?

The truth is, we are blessed to be a blessing. If we are praying for God to bless *us*, essentially our end goal in praying that prayer is to bless others. If we are praying for God to enlarge our territory,

our heart should be so that it any increase we experience in our time, talent or treasure would be to give it away and bless others!

PRAYER PROMPT:

Spend the next 20 minutes or so in prayer. Invite the Presence of the Holy Spirit to come and fill you to overflowing. You can start by praying these 3 words: “Holy Spirit, Come.”

Let’s take some time to pray an honorable prayer in unity today, that God would truly bless our church and enlarge our territory...That we may reach more people with His good news...That through our blessing, through our enlarged territory, more people would come to BELIEVE in Jesus, BELONG to our family, BECOME all they were meant to be and BUILD His Kingdom together with us!

DAY 10 – JANUARY 14

I pray that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding. For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ's return. May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ — for this will bring much glory and praise to God. | PHILIPPIANS 1:9-11

In his letter to the Philippian church, the Apostle Paul, missionary, pastor, and church-planting extraordinaire, knew that a growing church was made up of growing Christians. He took time to pray for and instruct believers on how to grow in their faith—because as long as they were overflowing with God's love, flourishing in the knowledge of what matters to God, and full of His character, it would bring much glory and praise to God.

In other words, God in us, is attractive. People are instinctively drawn towards other people who display outwardly God's Spirit who dwells in them inwardly. This doesn't happen overnight — it happens as we grow and mature!

God wants to grow His church — but to grow His church, He must grow us first! WE are His plan for bringing His hope to a broken and dying world. Colossians 1:27 says that, *Christ in US is the hope of glory to those who don't know Him yet.*

So today — let's pray that God would grow His church by growing us.

PRAYER PROMPT:

Spend the next 20 minutes or so in prayer. Invite the Presence of the Holy Spirit to come and fill you to overflowing. You can start by praying these 3 words: “Holy Spirit, Come.”

Take some time to pray Philippians 1:9-11 by personalizing it.

i.e. “God may Your love in me overflow more and more. Help me to grow in knowledge and understanding of what really matters, etc.”

I see a church whose worship unites heaven and earth. Passionate, unhindered worship that touches the Father's heart and draws people closer to Him. I see fresh and new songs being birthed here...songs that break chains, heal the sick and bring the dead back to life. I see people all over the world singing these songs in every tongue for the glory of God.

THE CHURCH THAT I SEE
Pastor Christina Lowery, October 2019

DAY 11 – JANUARY 15

But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. | JOHN 4:23

Jesus tells us that the Father is looking for true worshipers who will worship Him in spirit and in truth. The question we should ask ourselves today is, *would He find that kind of a worshiper in me?*

When we worship in spirit and in truth, there is an alignment that takes place between our heart and the heart of God. The Greek word for “spirit” in this passage is *pneuma*, which essentially means *the life-giving breath of God*.

Worship truly is an intimate interaction between us and God because we become so close, that we breathe His breath. He is searching for people who will not only inhale his breath of life but will exhale it back to Him in worship. This is what it means to worship Him in spirit.

To worship Him in truth, we align our heart and soul with His. We exchange our truth for His truth. We worship Him for who He is and what He does instead of focusing on what we see or feel.

This is the kind of worship He is looking for: Alignment. Obedience. Trust. Intimacy. Faith. Belief. Will He find that in me today?

PRAYER PROMPT:

Spend the next 20 minutes or so in prayer. Invite the Presence of the Holy Spirit to come and fill you to overflowing. You can start by praying these 3 words: “Holy Spirit, Come.”

Spend your prayer time today not seeking His Hands (what He can give you), but His Face (intimacy). Inhale His breath of life, love, strength, joy, peace, etc – and exhale your worship. Thank him and praise him for His goodness. His grace. His mercy.

DAY 12 – JANUARY 16

*But you are holy, you who **inhabit** the praises of Israel.*
| PSALM 22:3 (WEB)

*Yet you are holy, **enthroned** on the praises of Israel.*
| PSALM 22:3 (NLT)

Wow! King of Heaven, God Most Holy, Great and Mighty One, the Creator of the Universe inhabits, dwells in, lives in, and is enthroned on our praises! He dwells wherever our worship is lifted up! His throne sits upon our praises!

It's powerful to ponder the truth that our worship unites heaven and earth. Perhaps this is why He searches for worshipers who will worship him in spirit and in truth – He's looking for a home! He's looking for a temple to dwell in! He wants His throne to be among us!

That's amazing and exciting – and in good times, boy is it easy to give God the praise He deserves! What about when we face difficulty though? Can we still praise Him in the same way? You'd never know by reading Psalm 22:3 alone, but Psalm 22 was actually a tragic lament of David. Look at the pain from which he writes in verses 1-2:

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, and from the words of my groaning? My God, I cry in the daytime, but you don't answer; in the night season, and am not silent.

But you are holy, you who ***inhabit*** the praises of Israel.
| PSALM 22:3 (WEB)

You know what David is doing here? He is praising God *even though*. Even though he feels forsaken by God. Even though He feels like God is too far to help. Even though God remains silent. He praises a good God *even though* his life is not in a good place. And He reminds himself that God is holy, and that He inhabits the praises of his people.

Will you praise him today? Will you praise him *even though*? Whether you're on a mountain top, or in a dark valley — Will you give Him your praise today? He's holy! And he WILL inhabit your praises!

PRAYER PROMPT:

Spend the next 20 minutes or so in prayer. Invite the Presence of the Holy Spirit to come and fill you to overflowing. You can start by praying these 3 words: "Holy Spirit, Come."

Read the entirety of Psalm 22. Notice how David turns his pain into praise. If you're in a painful season today like David was in this song of lament, follow his lead and turn your pain into praise. He will inhabit your praises!

And if you're in a season of blessing – praise Him all the more! He still inhabits your praises!

DAY 13 – JANUARY 17

Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth! Worship the Lord with gladness. Come before him, singing with joy. Acknowledge that the Lord is God! He made us, and we are his.

We are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good. His unending love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation. | PSALM 100

Have you ever been to any kind of a sports game where you are rooting for one of the teams? What happens when your team scores? You shout with joy. You jump up and down. You raise your hands. It's a natural, instinctive reaction that humans seem to have when they receive really good news.

How about attending a live concert of your favorite band? It's amazing to watch as thousands upon thousands of people will shout and sing with joy...and we can't help but join them! We'll clap our hands and dance with arms raised as our favorite songs are performed, and there is no shame in doing so. Why? Because we were designed to worship.

If we really acknowledged that the Lord is God, that He made us, and we belong to him like the beloved sheep of his pasture — we would respond instinctively with thanksgiving and praise. We would shout with joy and worship Him with gladness.

He is GOOD. His unending love lasts forever. His faithfulness continues past our final breath and into every generation to follow. He is worthy of our praise – let's praise Him!

PRAYER PROMPT:

Spend the next 20 minutes or so in prayer. Invite the Presence of the Holy Spirit to come and fill you to overflowing. You can start by praying these 3 words: "Holy Spirit, Come."

Respond to the Psalmist's call to worship. Shout! Sing! Be Thankful! Be Glad! Praise him!

DAY 14 – JANUARY 18

I waited patiently for the Lord to help me, and he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along. He has given me a new song to sing, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see what he has done and be amazed. They will put their trust in the Lord. | PSALM 40:1-3

This Psalm of David is a testimony of God’s amazing grace, compassion, and love. It’s not a make-believe fairy tale — it is a powerful account of David’s real-life experience. We don’t know exactly what David was going through when he wrote this song, but we know he was in a dark and hopeless place. Have you ever been there?

A testimony is a powerful thing because it is *evidence* of God’s movement and interaction with humanity in the midst of our mess. The bad news is, like many of us have, David had fallen into a state of depression. He was sinking deep in a pit of despair and crying out desperately for the Lord to rescue Him. The good news is — God came to his rescue! He lifted David out, set his feet on solid ground, steadied him and helped him on his way! He moved forward in healing and hope.

If you’ve ever been in a dark place like David, you know that this is very GOOD NEWS! His testimony is evidence that God hears our cries. He lifts us out of dark places and sets us on a new path of destiny — and we can experience the same joy and freedom that David experienced!

This put a new song in David's heart — a song of praise to the God of His deliverance! What has God done for you? Have you been delivered from the pit of despair? Has He healed you? Has He saved you from the grip of hell and promised you eternal life with Him? Sing a new song! Praise Him for what he's done!

Here's the best part of it all: our testimony — our praise to God will help others, *many* others, to see what God has done for us, and they will come to trust in Him as well!

PRAYER PROMPT:

Spend the next 20 minutes or so in prayer. Invite the Presence of the Holy Spirit to come and fill you to overflowing. You can start by praying these 3 words: "Holy Spirit, Come."

Take some time to list out what God has done for you. In your own way (whether it be singing to him, writing out a prayer of thanksgiving, or speaking to Him from your heart,) praise Him for what He's saved you from, what He's blessed you with, Who He is and all that He has done for you! And then find a way to testify your thankfulness today!

I see a church who invests into and nurtures every living generation. I see the seasoned and mature teaching the young and the growing. I see spiritual mothers and fathers raising up spiritual sons and daughters. I see a church who is like a green house, planting, nurturing and developing world changers at every age.

I see a church with world-class ministry and leadership training for both the young and the old alike. A school that not only provides a quality education but equips and empowers the younger generation to make a difference *now*, and not just someday.

THE CHURCH THAT I SEE
Pastor Christina Lowery, October 2019

DAY 15 – JANUARY 19

*One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could lay his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples scolded the parents for bothering him. But Jesus said, “**Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them!** For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children.” And he placed his hands on their heads and blessed them before he left. |*

MATTHEW 19:13-15

Jesus loves when we bring children to Him! In Matthew 19, he tells his disciples, “Let them come to me! Don’t stop them from coming, and don’t let anyone stop you from bringing them to me! My Kingdom belongs to them!”

Jesus had very limited time on earth and during his three years of ministry. He had a big mission to fulfill in very little amount of time. His disciples must have sensed the urgency and importance of what He came to do, and they assumed that interacting with children was a total waste of His time. He was the Messiah! Surely Messiahs are too busy for kids, right?

But the disciples soon found out that children weren’t a *waste* of Jesus’ time, they were *worth* it. Before He left this particular scene, Jesus lingered and placed His hands on each of their heads to bless them. He didn’t only come for adults — He came for the young and old alike!

If children are worth Jesus’ limited time, then surely, they are worth our time as well! Jesus took time to interact with them and bless them. What can we do to invest into the children around

us? In our home? In our church? In our neighborhood? Our children's friends?

Let them come to Jesus — don't stop them!

PRAYER PROMPT:

Spend the next 20 minutes or so in prayer. Invite the Presence of the Holy Spirit to come and fill you to overflowing. You can start by praying these 3 words: "Holy Spirit, Come."

Take some time to thank God for the children in your life. Pray for them specifically. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead them into a personal relationship with Jesus. Pray for their teachers at church and at school, their coaches, their caretakers – anyone who is pouring into their lives.

DAY 16 - JANUARY 20

One generation shall commend your works to another and shall declare your mighty acts. | Psalm 145:4 (ESV)

Each generation has a responsibility to raise up the next generation. No matter who we are, where we've come from, our ethnicity, our social class, our race, our occupation – each of us have an obligation to teach, train, influence, nurture and grow those who will inherit the earth when we are gone. And truthfully, we are raising the next generation whether we are trying to or not!

Each of us should ask ourselves the question, *what kind of a generation am I raising?* Whether we like it or not, our words, actions, decisions, and ultimately, the way we live our lives is making a profound influence on the generation that is coming up behind us.

One of the best ways we can influence the next generation in a sustainable, life-giving, God-honoring way, is to testify to them of His great works and mighty acts! Those who have been around a little longer have surely lived and learned! We must teach the younger ones all that God has taught us!

Our own personal God-stories and lessons are powerful in raising up the next generation! The younger generation wants to know how God delivered us and saved us, how He's been kind and merciful to us, how He healed us and set us free. They want to know our love story with Him!

We can see throughout scripture that the passing down stories of praise to God from age to age has always been the primary way

generations remember the goodness of God. The lessons that God has taught us in our generation is of such value to those in the next. Don't keep his great works and mighty acts to yourself! Pass it on!

PRAYER PROMPT:

Spend the next 20 minutes or so in prayer. Invite the Presence of the Holy Spirit to come and fill you to overflowing. You can start by praying these 3 words: "Holy Spirit, Come."

Ask the Holy Spirit how you can spiritually mentor, mother, father, disciple, pastor, teach the younger generation starting this year!

DAY 17 – JANUARY 21

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm. | Proverbs 13:20 (ESV)

Take a moment and think about the people you are walking through life with. Would you say that you are walking with anyone who is truly wise? The dictionary defines “wise” as, *having or showing experience, knowledge and good judgment.*

Life is hard and full of challenges and we need someone who is wise to walk with. When we’re facing big life decisions, difficult situations or even presented with great opportunities, the bible says it’s really important to walk with others who have experienced life, have gained knowledge and can exercise good judgment. When we continue to walk with such people, not only will they help us to make good choices, we become wise as well!

No matter what stage of life you are in, you should seek out a relationship with a spiritual mentor. Even better, ask that God would bless you with a spiritual mother / father if you don’t already have one. Just like any good parent, a spiritual mother / father loves their spiritual children unconditionally. They’re committed to take the long road with you, to nurture, correct, and encourage them along their journey. We could all use someone like that, couldn’t we?

Unfortunately, a great number of young and younger believers are growing up as spiritual orphans. Many are wandering through life alone or walking with fools instead of walking with the wise. We all need someone to turn to who’s lived life a little longer, who will share their own tragedies and victories with us, who will pass on

the wisdom they've gained, and the biblical truth they've learned along the way. We all need someone who's older and wiser, who will speak faith into our situations that seem impossible. We all need to know and be assured that we are not alone!

PRAYER PROMPT:

Spend the next 20 minutes or so in prayer. Invite the Presence of the Holy Spirit to come and fill you to overflowing. You can start by praying these 3 words: "Holy Spirit, Come."

What is the Holy Spirit saying to you today? Take some time to listen.

Whether you are sensing that you need to seek out a spiritual mentor or become one, commit to the Lord in an obedient response.

Pray that God would raise up more and more spiritual mothers and fathers in our church!

DAY 18 – JANUARY 22

As a fellow elder, I appeal to you: Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly— not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care but lead them by your own good example. And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor. In the same way, ***you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders.*** And all of you, dress yourselves in humility as you relate to one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." | 1 PETER 5:1-5

Serving the next generation is a service to God.

As maturing believers, hopefully we are coming to a clear understanding that God not only expects us to invest into the next generation, he has *entrusted us with them*. Yes, God has entrusted each of us to care for anyone who is younger than we are, and to be a good example to them.

This can look a million different ways — whether we teach them, pastor them, mentor them, coach them, or just become a good friend to them — we serve God by serving them. Humble, servant-leadership is the approach that Peter admonishes the elders of his churches to take as they care for the next generation.

To those who are older, we must remember: leadership does not require a position or a title. As John Maxwell says, *leadership is influence* — and the best way we can lead the next generation is to be a godly influence while being clothed in humility.

Likewise, to those who are younger, we must respect those who are older and accept their authority. They've lived life longer – they

have gained wisdom through their own difficulties. They've got more battle scars than we do. There's wisdom in the old rule of etiquette, "Respect your elders!"

As the older generation teaches, trains and guides us, we must dress ourselves in humility as well, for *God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble!*

PRAYER PROMPT:

Spend the next 20 minutes or so in prayer. Invite the Presence of the Holy Spirit to come and fill you to overflowing. You can start by praying these 3 words: "Holy Spirit, Come."

How has this 1 Peter 5:1-5 spoken to you? What is God asking of you today? Have a conversation with Him about where He is leading you.

The church that I see always pioneering
and moving forward and forcefully
advancing God's Kingdom here on earth.

The church that I see...
is Crossroads Church!

THE CHURCH THAT I SEE
Pastor Christina Lowery, October 2019

DAY 19 - JANUARY 23

*And from the time John the Baptist began preaching until now, **the Kingdom of Heaven has been forcefully advancing...***

| MATTHEW 11:12

In this passage of scripture, Jesus makes a huge announcement: His spiritual Kingdom — the Kingdom of Heaven (Kingdom of God) — had come to the earth and ever since it arrived, has been *forcefully* advancing.

What does this mean? Essentially, from the moment John the Baptist began to preach and prepare the way for Jesus, all the way until now — God’s Kingdom has been spreading and increasing across the earth. The Greek translation of the phrase “forcefully advancing” is *to force one’s way into*. The Enemy (Satan) and his Kingdom of Darkness had laid claim of the earth — but Jesus came to force His way into Satan’s Kingdom and take back what belongs to God, the heart and soul of mankind!

It’s true that there are times when it feels and seems like Satan’s Kingdom still has full dominion. It seems like we are losing ground instead of taking it. But the truth is — God’s Kingdom is on the offense! And whenever the enemy seems to have the upper hand, he is only responding in defense, because he is fighting a losing battle!

As God’s Kingdom advances forcefully, the Kingdom of Darkness is crumbling! And as the Kingdom of Darkness loses its power over the earth, the Kingdom of God is strengthening and expanding! Hallelujah!

These are exciting days we live in and we get to be a part of strengthening and expanding God's Kingdom into the farthest, darkest corners of the earth!

It's an exciting mission — but we must be aware that taking the enemy's territory is not something that will happen passively. That's why Jesus said His Kingdom is *forcefully* advancing. A forceful advancement into enemy territory must be powerful and there must be urgency to the task.

Our mission in the advancement of God's Kingdom is to help people,

- BELIEVE: that Jesus Christ is Lord and experience new life in Him
- BELONG: to the family of God
- BECOME: all that God designed and intended them to be
- BUILD: the Kingdom of God and make a difference in the lives of others!

We each have a part to play in forcefully advancing God's Kingdom! Let's roll up our sleeves and get to work church!

PRAYER PROMPT:

Spend the next 20 minutes or so in prayer. Invite the Presence of the Holy Spirit to come and fill you to overflowing. You can start by praying these 3 words: "Holy Spirit, Come."

Ask God what your next step is and how you can serve the Body of Christ to advance God's Kingdom.

DAY 20 – JANUARY 24

Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see. By faith we understand that the entire universe was formed at God's command, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen. And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him. | Hebrews 11:1,3 & 6

Congratulations – you made it to the final day of PRAYER 20.20! I hope that these 20 days of praying into the Vision of 2020 has encouraged you and strengthened you in your faith!

As we head into a new year and a new decade, I hope that PRAYER 20.20 will be a launching pad for you – I am praying and believing that this year, you will

RISE UP

- ... **with vision for your life and ministry!**
- ... **with a strong faith that cannot be shaken!**
- ... **with determination, tenacity and resilience to advance God's Kingdom!**
- ... **with compassion for the lost, the broken and the needy!**
- ... **with a hunger and thirst for MORE of God's presence!**
- ... **with strength to run the race God has set before you!**

Together, let's believe that if God could form the entire universe out of nothing at the sound of His command, then He can do ANYTHING! Nothing is impossible with God!

I hope you'll be joining us TONIGHT for our Encounter Night of Worship as we REJOICE together for all He has done, is doing and will do in 2020 and beyond! The Best is Yet to Come!

Christina

Ps. Christina Lowery

PRAYER PROMPT:

Spend the next 20 minutes or so in prayer. Invite the Presence of the Holy Spirit to come and fill you to overflowing. You can start by praying these 3 words: "Holy Spirit, Come."

Take some time to THANK GOD for all he has done in your heart and soul these past 20 days! Declare His goodness and thank him for all He's getting ready to do in 2020!

