



Welcome to Day 8 of 21 Days of Prayer!
The theme of our SECOND week is LISTEN
What are we sensing from the Lord?

Today we are looking at Jeremiah 31:16-17

We are entering into week 2 of our prayer initiative. We are also moving from seeking to listening. What is the Lord speaking to us? What are we sensing?

If you are unsure how to hear from the Lord or you do not feel confident that it is God speaking to you, here are a few ideas to help you begin to recognize his voice:

God always speaks through scripture. One of the best ways to discern what you are sensing is to open your Bible and read. Utilize the scripture readings provided during our 21 days of prayer to help you hear and discern what the Lord is laying on your heart.

God often uses other people to speak to you. If you are trying to discern, seek out someone you trust and is mature in their walk with God and share your thoughts with them. They will be a big help to you in discernment. As well, often a good friend will speak into your life even when you're not seeking out help.

Pay attention to your gut. Does what you're hearing line up with God's character? Is it in keeping with who he is? Do you have a sense of peace or confusion surrounding the issue? Confusion does not come from God.

Test what you are hearing and see if doors open or close, whether people affirm or discourage what you're hearing, and whether you continue to have peace.

Finally, be open to new ways of listening for God's voice. Pay attention to things around you, things you are hearing and seeing everywhere.

The more you practice these things and the more you spend time with the Lord, the more familiar his voice will become.

As we turn the corner this week toward listening for God's voice, you are encouraged to continue with the practices from last week including journaling. If you are straining to hear his voice, make a point of setting aside some quiet alone time free from distraction in order to really listen. As well, the practice of fasting is helpful in reminding you to pray, to seek God and to listen. You might want to try fasting one meal this week in order to hear better.

Take some time now to read today's scripture, paying attention to any themes that might be emerging from the last 8 days of prayer. Continue to pray for the renewal of our city. If the Lord lays anything specific on your heart to pray for with regard to our city, go forward in that.

Thank you for your willingness to step out in faith
together as a community of believers.



Welcome to Day 9 of 21 Days of Prayer!

LISTEN

What are we sensing from the Lord?

Today we are looking at Psalm 23:1, Psalm 84:10-12

Reading these passages of scripture, I was reminded of a worship song called "Jesus is Better" by Aaron Ivey and Brett Land. Having heard the story behind the song lyrics, I invite you to engage in a little exercise of the imagination.

Imagine in the midst of your deepest despair, you are able to say "Jesus is Better". Now imagine the best day of your life and still being able to say "Jesus is Better". And genuinely mean it.

What do these scripture passages evoke in you? Take a few minutes to re-read these texts. Use your imagination and place yourself in the scripture. Read the scripture again visualizing the same kind of longing for God in your own life. In fact, I encourage you to read both Psalms in their entirety, imagining yourself in the text.

Longing is our soul's cry for more. Our soul is the deepest part of our being and the place we connect with God.

Author Ruth Haley Barton writes in her book "Sacred Rhythms", "When we pay attention to our longing and allow questions about our longing to strip away the outer layers of self-definition, we are tapping into the deepest dynamic of the spiritual life. The stirring of spiritual desire indicates that God's Spirit is already at work within us, drawing us to Himself."

Paying attention and acknowledging our longing requires us to be open and vulnerable even to ourselves.

How do we cultivate this kind of longing in our own life? And will we allow God to be the One who meets that longing in us? How will we get to a place where we can say with conviction, "The Lord is my Shepherd. I lack nothing"?

Here is the link to the song Jesus is Better. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H0QotnipM-o> Take a listen.

RENEWAL IS COMING!



Welcome to Day 10 of 21 Days of Prayer!

LISTEN

What are we sensing from the Lord?

Today we are looking at Joel 2:15-27

We pick up where we left off last week in the book of Joel. This passage immediately follows the verses that challenged us to rend our hearts.

It is a continued call to repentance. Renewal and revival cannot come without repentance. We don't repent because God is so mean that we fear what will happen to us. We repent because the goodness and mercy of God draws us toward him. He will spare us from what we deserve if we turn back to him.

As we continue reading, we see in a time of repentance we cannot carry on as usual. Our hearts need to turn and our ways need to change. There is a bit of a shake up in our lives. Repentance is 180 degree turn from your old ways. We become a new person. Things are different.

As we seek renewal or revival, we also need to pray on behalf of others, asking God to spare his people.

The best part of all is God responds. When we seriously repent, he takes notice. But he does more than that. God becomes zealous, meaning fervent or impassioned. He becomes extravagant with his blessing, restoring all that had been taken away. And he removes all shame from his people.

Fast forward to 2020. Here and now. How does this scripture passage speak to us today in our culture and context? What would this look like in our lives and in our city?

Do we believe repentance is necessary? What would a 180 degree turn look like in our own lives?

What can we be praying on behalf of our city? What would renewal look like in our city? Do we believe this could happen? How badly do we want it?

RENEWAL IS COMING!



Welcome to Day 11 of 21 Days of Prayer!

LISTEN

What are we sensing from the Lord?

Today we are looking at Hebrews 13:1-8

As we listen for God's voice through our reading of scripture today, try reading it through the lens of being Christ's ambassador.

Reading through this passage through the eyes of "an official representative of the Gospel on behalf of Jesus, how does it affect you?

Are we able to live out the Gospel with the confidence stated in this scripture text? It is one thing to do good things for others, but what about the pursuit of holiness in our life as well as being a good person?

Take a few moments to re-read the scripture, paying attention to what the Holy Spirit might be revealing to you about what it means to be an ambassador for Christ and living a holy life in response to the extravagant love and grace offered to us by him.

Continue to pray for our city and what it means to show hospitality to strangers.

RENEWAL IS COMING!



Welcome to Day 12 of 21 Days of Prayer!

LISTEN

What are we sensing from the Lord?

Today we are looking at Philippians 4:4-9,12-13

Today's passage of scripture is an invitation into the rest and joy of God - an invitation to set aside all the things that keep us awake at night and receive the Lord's peace.

We live in a culture that it is anxiety-ridden and punctuated by massive discontent. Watching the news can be terrifying and discouraging. Anxiety and depression are now the number one reason for visiting the doctor. Everywhere we look, we are constantly pummelled with ads that tell us we do not have enough. At breakneck speed, our possessions become obsolete, pushing us to continually upgrade everything from our technological devices to our cars and wardrobe and even our relationships.

We wake up every morning feeling like we are falling behind. But this constant pursuit for more only leads us into a cycle of dissatisfaction causing more anxiety.

The apostle Paul is telling us to **REJOICE!** As much as this scripture is in an invitation, it is also a command. He is telling us it doesn't have to be this way. **REJOICE!**

God is inviting us into his peace and abundance which come from a different place than what the world offers us. It does not become obsolete and we won't run out of it.

You see, the opposite of joy is not sadness. It is fear. Fear and discontent are joy-stealers. So Paul also gives us a practical way to offset the anxiety, fear and discontentment. He tells us where to focus our minds - it is a discipline that we have to engage in every single day especially in the world we live in.

As well, Paul tells us what he has learned about contentment in his own life. He tells us the only way he could overcome anxiety, fear, discontentment was with the strength of the Lord and through the renewal of his mind

I encourage you to sit in this text for awhile today. Take it with you through out the day. Write it out and place it where you stumble upon it throughout the day. Practice focusing your mind on different things today. Turn away from the things that fill your mind with fear or anxiety. When you begin to feel anxious, discouraged, or overwhelmed, put into practice what Paul is teaching and see where the Lord takes you. But don't wait until you feel anxious, practice gratitude always and over time you will discover the outcome is joy and peace.

REJOICE! We can do this through Christ who gives us strength!

RENEWAL IS COMING!



Welcome to Day 13 of 21 Days of Prayer!

LISTEN

What are we sensing from the Lord?

Today we are looking at Joshua 1:7-9, Exodus 14:13-14

If yesterday's scripture was an invitation and a command, today's passage is a call and a command. Yesterday we were invited to experience peace and joy from the Lord and today we are being called to be strong, bold and courageous.

All these things - peace, joy, strength and courage - are outcomes. We cannot manufacture or attain joy or courage. They are the consequence of other disciplines in our lives that we choose to put into regular practice as a way of being.

As well, these passages of scripture never tell us to do something or be a certain way without offering practical ways to get there. Once again, we find that God's way is the opposite way of the world. Rather than striving, he says be still. Rather than productivity, he says meditate. He calls for obedience rather than efficiency. Instead of external or outward behaviour, he says focus your mind.

He invites us to transformation from the inside out. He calls us to step out with trust in order to experience his strength. He commands us to live this out in such a way that others will see his goodness.

The meaning of the word command (mitz'vah) in the Hebrew language was not to convey force or power. It is better understood as a directive. The ancient Hebrews were a nomadic people and they used landmarks such as rivers or mountains to give them direction on their journey. The mits'vah of the Bible are not commands, or rules and regulations. They are directives or landmarks that we look for to guide us.

When we spend time with God regularly as we have been doing during our 21 days of prayer, we become more in tune with God's character, how he thinks, what he desires and we realize we are not alone. He is not asking us to do anything on our own. It is always God with us wherever we go.

Again today, sit in these passages of scripture. Re-read them. Soak in them. Take them with you throughout the day. Be aware of moments when you may require courage or boldness. Remember you have the Holy Spirit in you and you have the strength of the Lord to draw on.

BE STRONG AND VERY COURAGEOUS - RENEWAL IS COMING!



Welcome to Day 14 of 21 Days of Prayer!

LISTEN

What are we sensing from the Lord?

Today we are looking at John 15:5-17

Spending time with God, training ourselves in the renewing of our mind, stepping out in faith and serving others builds spiritual muscle. If we are going to be bold, courageous, and content, we need spiritual strength.

There is no way around it... the only way you get strong is to train, lift weights, and practice. Creating habits around building spiritual muscle requires intentionally setting aside time to spend with God and there are many different ways to do this. It's worth exploring various ways to do this based on your own personality, keeping in mind that scripture is one of the primary ways God speaks. As well, having a community around us is vital to our depth and growth.

Spiritual muscle is what will sustain us when difficulties arise or when we hit a low point in our walk with God.

When you read through today's scripture, highlight all the words that keep repeating themselves in the passage. When you see a word over and over again in a text, there is usually some significance attached to it. How do these highlighted words speak to you? What do you think the Lord is trying to convey to you? Listen closely for his nudge.

The practice of Sabbath is another important way to build spiritual muscle. Regularly setting aside time (once a week) to rest in the presence of God will refresh and renew us so we can step out in faith and service once again.

Enjoy your Sabbath rest today.

RENEWAL IS COMING!