

AT FIRST BAPTIST DECATUR

21 DAYS OF PRAYER



## SANCTUARY OPEN FOR PRAYER

## APRIL 2 APRIL 9 APRIL 16

During the Easter season, we want to give FBC members an opportunity to spend dedicated time in prayer. The Sanctuary will be open on Wednesday mornings leading up to Easter from 7:00-8:00 a.m. Please come and go as your schedule allows. Use this time to pray through this booklet, Easter at FBC, personal requests, or simply spend time alone with the Lord.

## **SIGN-UP FOR PRAYER TEXTS**

If you aren't already receiving our Pastor's Prayer Texts, text "PRAY" to (938) 336-9522 to receive daily text messages with our *21 Days of Prayer* requests from this booklet, followed by other FBC-related prayer requests every 2-3 days after Easter.

# TURNING TO THE LORD

WEEK ONE

## DAY I GOD'S PROMISE OF A SAVIOR

"Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool." Isaiah 1:18

#### Reflection:

Once again, we find that God's people in Judah have made a deliberate choice to turn away in disobedience and are vulnerable to attack by their enemies. Isaiah confronts the spiritual condition of Israel but also includes a promise of grace in this scripture. We know that Grace – His name is Jesus. I'm always moved as I read over and over in scripture of the Lord's faithful and unending love. Here we see God's call and invitation to repentance. He paints a visual picture, "our sins are scarlet, red like crimson, they shall be as white as snow." That reminded me of the snow we experienced several weeks ago. We woke up to a world covered in white snow. It was quiet, serene, and peaceful. Isn't that what Jesus Christ accomplished for us? He covers the chaos of our scarlet, crimson sin with His perfect peace, grace, and hope. He died, He was buried, and He rose victorious. As Easter approaches, let's rejoice in the Son of man and the Son of God who laid down His life for us. We stand forgiven and blameless before a Mighty God.

## DAY I CONTINUED

## Prayer:

Lord, You and only You are worthy of all the glory, honor, power, and praise. Thank You for that amazing grace and that unconditional love only found in a relationship with Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. We know the dark days and suffering He experienced, but rejoice that Sunday's coming. It's in His mighty, powerful, and matchless name I pray. Amen.

# DAY 2 HEARTFELT REPENTANCE

"Return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments." Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster."

Joel 2:12-13

#### Reflection:

This passage is a powerful call of genuine repentance. The prophet Joel speaks on behalf of the Lord, urging his people to return to Him with sincerity. God desires an authentic turning of the heart, rather than outward displays of sorrow. The phrase, "rend your hearts, not your garments," is a reminder that God is not looking for superficial acts. He is looking for a deep, personal transformation. This passage is a reminder that God longs for a relationship, not rituals.

## Prayer:

Lord, I come to You now with humility, asking You to renew my heart. Break down my barriers of pride and distraction that keep me from fully surrendering to You. Teach me to rend my heart, not just my garments. Lord, help me to surrender totally to You, not just in word, but in spirit. Help me to live in response to Your love. Amen.

## **CAGE DAVIDSON**

# DAY 3 HOPE FOR RESTORATION

"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

2 Chronicles 7:14

#### Reflection:

This verse is a promise God gives to troubled believers. Whether it is times of struggle individually, or if it is a city/nation struggling with division. This verse is the ultimate hope for restoration. First, we must begin by humbling ourselves and recognizing He is sovereign over all things. Next, we are to seek Him in our prayers. Communication with our Heavenly father is essential in restoration. Third, we must seek God by making Him a priority. He should always be at the top of our priority list. Last, we must turn away from sin. We are commanded to walk in holiness and righteousness. If we are willing to do these four things, forgiveness, revival, and restoration will follow.

## Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we seek Your face at this special time of year. We come to You humble in spirit and ask that You forgive us for the sins we have committed. As we put You first in our lives, we ask that You hear our prayers. God, we ask that You heal our individual relationships, revive our city, bring togetherness to our country, and bring peace throughout the world. May a revival break out in our land. Amen.

**DELYN CAMP** 

## DAY 4

## FINDING PEACE AND JOY DAILY

"Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded."

James 4:8

#### Reflection:

Like many other things in our Christian lives we want to make what God asks us into something we do in our power. I found this saying a long time ago; "Jesus is nearer than the door." As the words of this song say; "We will never be the same again. Jesus is here. Reach out to Him. His power is here. All things are new!" (To listen: Musixmatch Songwriters: Nathaniel Bassey, Never the Same © Tunecore Global)

Wake up, look up, look down, wherever. Jesus is here, right here. At least one translation of this verse says; "come close to God." Draw seems to imply we supply the power to bring Jesus near. Oh no, Jesus is here. We need to open our will each day, each moment to Jesus and say, "My Lord, I am willing to open my heart, mind, and soul to You this moment, this day, this week to follow You."

We often remain at a distance due to all the other things of life that come each moment rather than coming closer to God and allowing Him to heal us, guide us, fill us, make us what He desires.

## DAY 4 CONTINUED

As Christians, sin never removes us from our secure position in Christ. It most certainly breaks our fellowship with God, for sin is always a barrier that separates a sinner from a holy God. It can consume our time, desires, our influence with others, but peace and joy are found in the Father's love. We are wise to relinquish control of our lives, so that we may reap the benefits of His saving grace that we need to survive this side of heaven.

As we come to Easter, let us remember that Jesus paid the price for our sins, so that we might come each moment in our lives with a willing heart so that He might accomplish His purpose through us.

## Prayer:

Jesus, as I think about finding peace and joy daily let me be open to You and to Your will for my life each and every moment. Help me to trust Your will for facing the suffering of those close to me. Show me how to pray for them, how to minister to them, how to help bring Your peace and joy to them, how to bring understanding of what You did for each of us as You suffered and died for us on the cross of Calvary. I know You want to be my friend. Help me to be the person who is always open to Your desire. Help me to reach out to someone I know needs You and Your love, maybe even Your gift of salvation. Thank You, Jesus, for that day I said "yes" to You and realized I would never be the same. May we see others say "yes" to You in this season. Amen.

**BILL SHELTON** 

## DAY 5 LET'S TURN BACK TO THE LORD

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

1.lohn 1:9

## Reflection:

Because of our sinful nature, we pridefully put self first. Think of sin as being on a train going the wrong way. No matter how long we continue, the Lord is at that stop with open arms when we finally exit the train acknowledging and asking forgiveness for our sins. His cleansing and grace allow us to move forward in a righteous relationship with Him. What direction are you moving?

## Prayer:

Thank You, Jesus, for dying on the cross providing a path for my sins to be forgiven. Thank You for continually wanting a personal relationship with me. Open my eyes to my sins which keep me from connecting with You on a more personal level. Amen.

## **JANA SATTERFIELD**

# DAY 6 UVING IS CHRIST

"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

### Galatians 2:20

### Reflection:

The old self has been put to death and nailed to the cross. The blood that would have poured out of that body would be defiled by sin, but the blood that poured from Christ is pure, acceptable before God. God being rich in mercy stood in my place. Fully God and fully man, He died my death. Identifying with Him, I died with Him, and through His resurrection, I am given life. Therefore this life I live is no longer mine but His. Where He leads, I go. What He impresses, I do, until the day comes that I have fulfilled His purpose for me. Paul states, "to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

## Prayer:

Jesus, You bore the wrath of God for my sake. It is my sin that placed You on the cross. It is written, "Cursed is a man who is hung on a tree." You stood in my place and embraced the shame meant for me. But death could not hold You, it wielded no power over You. You laid Yourself down, and You picked Yourself up. Doing so, You proved Your authorship of life. You have paid for mine and freely offer a new life in You. By Your grace, I have freely received. May I be filled with Your spirit and truth, and being not ashamed, live this day empowered by You and for You. Through You I will live this day victoriously. Amen.

**AARON EDWARDS** 

# DAY 7 GATHER 'ROUND CHILDREN

"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."

Hebrews 10:22

#### Reflection:

Praise the Lord that we can draw ever closer to God the Father through the blood of Jesus Christ the Son. Jesus' atoning work on the cross and our faith in His shed blood are the basis for us to draw near to the God of all creation, our Abba Father.

As a teenager, I would go to church camp each summer where we would cap off the day's events with a campfire gathering. We drew close to the fire, sang songs of praise to the Lord, and heard words that pricked our hearts even unto salvation.

God says to each of us this Easter - "Gather 'Round, Children. I have much to teach you, and I want your praise to overflow from your hearts."

## Prayer:

Thank You, Father, for desiring to have an intimate relationship with each of us. May we, in turn, desire to draw near to You with praise on our lips and gratitude in our hearts for the sacrifice You made on our behalf. In the name of Jesus. Amen.



# LIVINGFOR THE LORD

WEEK TWO

# DAY 8 NO NEED TO WORRY

"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

Matthew 6:33

## Reflection:

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus was speaking to his disciples. There must have been a feeling of anxiousness among them for their basic needs of food, drink, and clothing. Jesus knew of their worries but was teaching them to put those concerns behind their pursuit of the kingdom and his righteousness. If we live for the Lord first, then God will provide for our needs. Our focus each day should be to try and be more like Jesus and to seek God's will for our lives. There is no need to worry, because we can rely on God's promises.

## Prayer:

Thank You, Lord, for giving me peace and the assurance that I can rest my concerns with You. You know my needs before I do. Help me keep my eyes on the Kingdom and seek Your will for my life. Amen.

## DAY 9 HOW TO HAVE A FRUITFUL LIFE

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me."

John 15:4

#### Reflection:

Jesus our Lord and Savior desires for us to have a fruitful life by abiding (remaining, staying around) in Him. Galatians 5:22-23 lists the fruit of the spirit which helps us to produce fruit in order to abide in Christ so that our lives will be pleasing to Him.

## Prayer:

Heavenly Father, I pray that as Your people we would humble ourselves, listen to Your voice, and be guided by the Holy Spirit in order that we can abide in You and You in us. In Jesus' name. Amen.



# DAY 10 A LIVING SACRIFICE

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

Romans 12:1

#### Reflection:

In response to the mercies of God given to us in Jesus Christ, Paul urges us to live a life offering our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, as a form of genuine worship. Let us recognize God's goodness and respond with a life of commitment to Him.

## Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank You, Lord, for Your mercies. Help me present my body as a living sacrifice, giving You glory in everything I do. Help me live a life of genuine worship, responding to Your salvation with a life of dedication to You. Thank You for Your goodness and Your grace. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.



## DAY II PERSEVERANCE IN GOOD WORKS

"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." Galatians 6:9

#### Reflection:

Once we have accepted Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we do good works as an act of our love and devotion to Him. Will there be days when we are tempted to give up doing these works? Absolutely! However, we must remember our works are not for ourselves. They are for the Lord! In the end He will bless those who have remained faithful in serving Him with their lives. May we always desire the Lord and do good works for Him!

## Prayer:

Dear Lord, as we strive daily to do good works, may we find our strength in You alone. Help us to persevere in our works, even when the Enemy tempts us to give up so easily. May our every effort point others to Your love and grace. Amen.

## DAY 12 BLIND FAITH

"For we walk by faith, not by sight."

2 Corinthians 5:7

#### Reflection:

This passage considers both the limits of our earthly bodies and the boundless provisions of the spiritual. Paul shares in just a few simple words how to walk this journey — by faith in God our Father who loves us most, the Almighty God and Creator of EVERYTHING. We are not to trust in our earth-bound, physically-limited sight or human-mind reasoning. James 1:6 details what affect this human logic has on the blind faith that we so desire. It tosses us about hither and yon. It's easy to believe when we see indicators, when we see precursors to what will probably happen. To believe without wavering in the unseen based on the promises of God is the faith Paul is talking about.

## Prayer:

Almighty God, I confess the sin of wanting to plan and control my life based on what I reason instead of Your promises. Father, thank You for the Holy Spirit that lives within me to help me walk by faith as I yield control to You moment by moment, day by day. I desire to please YOU, O Lord, and I trust that Your Words which I hide in my heart will empower me to walk by faith and not by sight or my own reasoning. I pray that Your Word will strengthen me to believe with my whole heart, without wavering, the promises You've given me. I pray this in the powerful name of Jesus. Amen.

**CAROL LYERLY** 

## **DAY 13**

## LET US PRAY FOR DIVINE ASSIGNMENTS

"Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him, and he will act."

Psalm 37:5

#### Reflection:

We should daily seek God's will for our lives by searching the scriptures for examples of how Jesus served mankind. Jesus served by healing the sick, the lame, and those possessed of all manner of evil. In the scripture we see the workings of Jesus in ways that bring glory to the Father. In numerous passages from the Bible, we see the commandments that God's disciples are to do good works.

Jesus declared that He came not to be served but to serve. Our purpose likewise is to serve others and thereby bring honor and glory to God the father. Jesus declared, "...for even the son of man came not to be served but to serve." (Mark 10:45) By using the modifier **even**, Jesus obviously declared that all God's children must be servants.

Our service should follow the same humility Jesus demonstrated when He washed the feet of His disciples. He so commended his disciples: "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you should also wash one another's feet." (John 13:14-15) Greatness in the kingdom is thus demonstrated by humble service that brings glory to our Father.

## DAY 13 CONTINUED

## Prayer:

Lord, teach me to love through serving. Help me to see the needs of others and to meet them with the same grace You have shown me. May my actions reflect Your love. Amen.



# DAY 14 COMMIT NOW AND ALWAYS

"Let your heart therefore be wholly true to the Lord our God, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments, as at this day."

1 Kings 8:61

#### Reflection:

At the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem, King Solomon exhorted the people to commit themselves to doing three things:

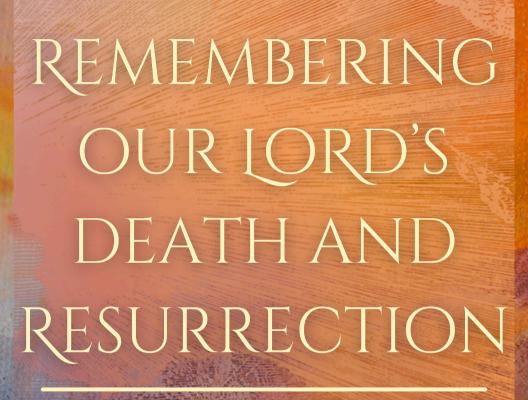
- 1. Wholeheartedly give yourselves to God, and Him alone.
- 2. Live daily in His Word.
- 3. Be obedient to all God teaches you to do.

Special days such as this day of dedication often encourages us to enthusiastically commit ourselves to follow and serve the Lord. Solomon's brief phrase "as at this day" serves as encouragement to not let our fire of commitment become cold coals.

## Prayer:

Father, give me wisdom and strength to faithfully serve, draw close and obey You now and every day. Amen.





WEEK THREE

# DAY 15 DECISIONS

"When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death."

Matthew 27:1

#### Reflection:

The chief priests and elders have finally determined a way to put Jesus to death. We know from the gospels this is what they have been plotting for some time. Just the night before, they had already decided that Jesus deserved death. This "counsel" is simply a culmination of decisions previously made. Why did the leaders not once, just one time, pray and seek God's will? Where is their shame in plotting and paying money for betrayal? Where is the humility in claiming to know God's will without seeking His counsel?

It would seem that the chief priests and elders are strong in religion and weak in faith.

## **Prayer:**

Lord, as we draw near to Easter, we pray that for those around us that they will not see us celebrating a holiday of religion but a celebration of faith. We want to know Your will. Help us to grow daily in faith in Your word, and we pray for those we come into contact with and those You have placed in our life that they will also come to know You and experience that faith. These requests we pray by faith in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ who humbly died for our sins. Amen.

**TONY LYERLY** 

## **DAY 16**

## **HUMBLE DEPENDANCE ON GOD**

"But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer."

Matthew 27:12

## Reflection:

The book of Matthew is full of the words of Jesus. His teachings were wise and powerful. Now, though, Jesus knows that the time for teaching has passed. He knows He is bound for the cross to die for the sins of humanity and He is not trying to escape it.

Jesus chose to say nothing, in response, and leave the situation in God's hands. This fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy of the suffering servant who "did not open His mouth." (Isaiah 53:7)

## Prayer:

Father, may I follow Jesus' example by humbly depending totally on You. May I always remember to trust in Your timing and justice, rather than trying to take matters in my own hands. And may I learn from Jesus' example of silence and submission during trials, trusting in Your ultimate plan. Amen.

**GINNY MATHERLY** 

## DAY 17 LET HIM BE CRUCIFIED

"Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified!""

Matthew 27:22

#### Reflection:

Pilate was desperate to avoid making a decision about Jesus in order to escape the negative consequences he knew would affect him no matter the decision he made. He was unsuccessful in avoiding the guestion, and his cowardice resulted in him being regarded as one of history's greatest villains. The guestion of what to do with Jesus is unavoidable for all of us. For the unbeliever, the question is simple and stark: will I surrender my life in faith to the lordship of Jesus or depend on myself for salvation and a meaningful life. For those of us who have said yes to Jesus, "What shall I do with Jesus?" is a question we face many times every day. The choices are still about surrender. Will I surrender to Jesus and trust Him to direct my life, or will I trust myself? Unlike Pilate in his no-win situation, how we answer the question results in a life of significance and joy, or one of frustration and meaninglessness.

## Prayer:

Father, strengthen my faith so that I am able to trust You in all things at all times. Thank You for Your great sacrifice that gave me the miraculous gift of salvation and an unbreakable relationship with You. Empower me to live out that reality day by day.

**DAVID SUTTON** 

## DAY 18

## **DISTRACTED BY LESSER THINGS**

"And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots."

## Matthew 27:35

## Reflection:

In this moment of Jesus' suffering, the soldiers gamble for His clothing, oblivious to the gravity of what is happening before them. They see only a condemned man, not the Savior offering Himself for the world. How often do we, too, get caught up in trivial pursuits while missing the deeper work of God around us? This verse fulfills prophecy (Psalm 22:18), reminding us that even in the darkest moments, God's plan is unfolding. The cross was not an accident: It was the sovereign will of God for our redemption. May we not be like the soldiers, distracted by earthly things, but instead, may we stand in awe of Christ's sacrifice.

- 1. Are there areas in my life where I am distracted by worldly concerns and missing God's work?
- 2. How does knowing that Christ's suffering was part of God's plan for redemption deepen my trust in Him?

## Prayer:

Lord Jesus, forgive me for the times I have been blind to Your presence and distracted by lesser things. You willingly endured the cross, and even in suffering, Your purpose was fulfilled. Help me to stand in awe of Your sacrifice and live in response to Your grace. Open my eyes to the ways You are working around me so that I may not miss Your presence. Amen.

**BRIAN DAVIDSON** 

# DAY 19 LAST SOUNDS FROM THE CROSS

"And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit."

Matthew 27:50

#### Reflection:

Matthew and Mark both describe the last sound of Jesus on the cross as being a loud cry. Luke says His loud cry included the words, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" John, the one to whom Jesus entrusted the care of His mother, caught the words, "It is finished." Those last sounds were no doubt heard by all who were at the crucifixion but interpreted differently. His mother Mary must have been heartbroken. His disciples and followers, surely hoping for another miracle, were distraught and disappointed. The scribes, Pharisees, soldiers, and centurions were probably satisfied and relieved, while many bystanders might have been confused, maybe even troubled and convicted. How would you or I have heard the last sound of Jesus? The story appeared to be over, but less than forty-eight hours later, everything changed.

## Prayer:

Dear Father, thank You for sending Your Son to die on the cross in my place. Thank You for giving Jesus the courage, the willingness, and the love necessary to endure the horrors of death by crucifixion. Help me to never forget this sacrifice and to be eager to share the Good News with those who've never heard.

## **CONNIE PEARSON**

# DAY 20 JESUS...FOR THE WIN!

"Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise."

Matthew 27:63

## Reflection:

The day after Jesus' death, there was much tension and worry among His persecutors. Could He really rise from the dead? Were they recounting the many ways they had persecuted Him? Securing His tomb became their plan! But a stone and a seal could not stop Jesus: As believers we know that anything is possible with Jesus, and we can trust His word. Put your worries in His hands and trust Him to take care of you.

## Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank You for being a loving and forgiving God. Thank You for sending Your son, Jesus, to take away my sins. Please help me to plant seeds of Your love in others so that they might reap the benefits of knowing and trusting You. Amen.

## **DAY 21**

## THE PROMISE OF THE EMPTY TOMB

"He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay."

Matthew 28:6

## Reflection:

Imagine Mary and Martha's shock when they arrived at the tomb with their burial spices and instead encountered an angel and an empty tomb! The angel first reminded the women that Jesus is a promise keeper, then he invited them to see for themselves that the tomb was indeed empty. Sin was conquered on the cross, and death was defeated at the empty grave--hallelujah! Jesus Christ, our risen savior, still rules today with the same faithfulness, power, and authority that defeated death and grave on that first Easter. Let us live victoriously in the power and promise of the empty tomb!

## Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank You for the promise that was fulfilled by the empty tomb--the promise to rescue and redeem us through the blood and resurrection of Your son Jesus. Let us be daily mindful that we serve a *living* savior who has ultimate power over sin and grave! Amen.

**ANDI PITMAN** 

