

40 DAYS OF PRAYER
LENT DEVOTIONAL

Week #2: February 19-24

Monday, February 19 | Day 5

Today's Devotional comes from Sarah Dorsey

Scripture: *John 17:2 "For you granted Him authority over all people that He might give eternal life to all those you have given Him."*

Reflecting on Jesus' authority to grant eternal life, how does that impact the way we view our purpose in sharing the message of salvation?

I've been a stay-at-home mom for the last nine years and I've recently found myself in a different phase of motherhood. All of our kids are now in school, and I've been feeling a bit of 'Well, now what am I supposed to do?' A lot of my time and identity had been wrapped up in changing diapers, juggling our schedules around nap times, play dates and feeding babies. It honestly has left me feeling a little lost now that things have shifted. Don't get me wrong, our house is still full of chaos and there is a long list of things to do, but it's different now. Maybe you're not a mom like me but I imagine you can relate to the ever changing ebbs and flows of life.

I've found so much comfort in reading Jesus' message to his disciples in Matthew 28. He says "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, GO and make disciples of all nations." Jesus clearly defines our purpose here on earth, and He lived it out as an example for us to follow. Then he reminds us in verse 20, "And surely I am with you always; to the very end of the age." He's not leaving me alone to figure it all out. How amazing is it that we can know that our Savior has been given authority over our life and as the Message translates our verse today "so He might give REAL and ETERNAL life to all in His care."

So, what do we do with this knowledge that Jesus has authority over our life and he wants us to go and make disciples? I've personally been convicted to begin small. Is there a neighbor that you see frequently but it's never moved past the awkward nod and wave? Strike up a conversation next time you see them and maybe ask them to go for a walk. Is there an old friend that's been on your mind that you've lost touch with? Call them up and go get coffee together. Is there a mom at your daughter's gymnastics lesson that you talk to every week but don't even know their name (I'm talking to myself here), ask it next time and dive deeper. It might be awkward at first but God calls us into this work. Real discipleship starts with building relationships with the people we interact with on a regular basis. It's real life and it's worth living that way. Today, I invite you to begin small.

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Prayer: Jesus, help this knowledge to dwell not only in our minds but also in our hearts. For you tell us that even the demons believe and tremble. We want to know that you are in authority and give purpose to our life on a heart level so that our lives are transformed in a way that our every word, action and thought contribute to furthering your kingdom here on earth. Amen.

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Tuesday, February 20 | Day 6

Today's Devotional comes from Andrew Abraham

Scripture: *John 17:3: Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*

Eternal life is about more than not dying.

In a recent sermon, "[In His Image](#)," we heard from several people who care for young people with special needs. It made me think back to my medical training, learning about many of these genetic variances and how these children wouldn't survive. With breakthroughs over time, I now occasionally see patients in my adult clinics who weren't expected to survive much beyond birth. As the wheels of progress turn, we will see lifespans extended. But no matter the advances, our life, "is like a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes." Ecclesiastes 1:3.

Eternal life isn't simply failing to die. The paradise we are given is an eternal life of knowing God.

Sometimes with God this relationship seems daunting due to the distance between His greatness and our brokenness. It's easy to feel the need to get right with God or improve oneself before seeking intimacy with Him. I think the first step in knowing the Almighty is realizing GOD LOVES YOU. We must pound deep into our hearts the truth that God is absolutely committed to us. He would and did do everything for us when he sent His Son to die on the cross and rise again. The work has been done, we don't need to fix ourselves first, He freely and fully gives Himself.

To know anyone deeply is not a simple task, and it doesn't occur in a moment. It takes time and work to really know someone. To build this relationship with Christ we must get to know Him as the Spirit moves within and around us, as He reveals Himself to us through His works and through time spent studying the Bible. We must take time to pray, to open our hearts to Him and discern His will. And we must take up our cross daily and follow Him ([see Luke 9:23](#)). For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face; now in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known ([see 1 Corinthians 13:12](#)).

In this Lenten season, as we prepare to celebrate the death and resurrection of Christ let us take the time to seek an intimate relationship with Christ.

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Wednesday, February 21 | Day 7

Today's Devotional comes from Phil Woodworth

Scripture: *John 17:4: "I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do."*

This is Jesus, the Son, talking to His Father, God, and stating powerfully that He, Jesus, has glorified the Father by accomplishing the work that He, Jesus, was given to do. What work was that? For Jesus it was teaching, preaching, admonishing, healing, and feeding, to name a few. Jesus' work in His community was done diligently and done well, and by the very act of accomplishing His appointed tasks, Jesus tells us that His Father was glorified.

In what ways can we actively bring glory to God by fulfilling the unique tasks and responsibilities He has entrusted to us?

God has given each of us unique talents and gifts that we use in the discharging of our daily routines and/or livelihoods. Differing jobs demand different sets of skills and abilities. "The work that You gave me to do," might be parenting, it might be welding or plumbing or doctoring or teaching or coaching or even piano tuning! In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus states according to Matthew 5:16, "Let your light so shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." The operative word in today's theme I think is "actively." Yes, we can do our jobs to the best of our abilities, with excellence and compassion and hope that the light of God is shining through us enough to give Him glory, but that is more passive in its witness. Let's think for a moment what we might do "actively" to bring glory to God as we fulfill the tasks with which we have been entrusted.

Perhaps the believing parent could invite an unchurched parent to lunch, praying that the Holy Spirit would plant a spiritual seed. Might the Welder comment to his or her client how blessed he or she is feeling today? Might the plumber leave a jobsite and say, "God bless you and your family" as he or she is walking out the door? Could the doctor leave his or her patient with a sincere, "I'll be praying for you?" Could the teacher or coach let some kids know that God loves them or that maybe those students might enjoy being part of a Bible study that the teacher or coach has organized before school? Then there's that piano tuner...that's me! How in the world could I "actively" give glory to God by tuning a piano? Well... It may be something as simple as playing "How Great Thou Art" at the end of every tuning (that goes over big at public schools and synagogues!), or asking my customer if they are active in a local church, or just commenting how blessed I feel to have a job that has been steady and reliable for over 50 years. Anything to pass the glory on through us and toward the One true and living God!

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Yes! Let your light shine from within but pray that God will show you ways to actively glorify Him by helping you create avenues of conversation and dialogue that will outwardly start the Glory ball rolling! And pray for the boldness to give Him that Glory!

Colossians 3:23 states: "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men."

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Thursday, February 22 | Day 8

Today's Devotional comes from Kaely Johnson

Scripture: *John 17:5: "And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began."*

Recently my husband and I sat down to watch the old Western Silverado. It's the story of four men who find themselves in a "Wild West" culture of chaos and corruption where the strong stomp the weak and take what they want. One man named Mal faces prejudice, and the destruction of his family. Over and over again, poor Mal shakes his head and says, "That ain't right." Talk about an understatement! Yet it rang true for me. Like Mal I've often felt, "That ain't right."

How about you? Maybe it's a personal heartache in your life or family. Maybe it's financial concerns or worries at work. Maybe it's the state of our world, with its corruption and division.

Regardless of the cause, when we feel this way, we have a choice. We can let ourselves get swept up in worry, fear, and resentment OR we can lean into the truth of who God is.

In John 17:5 Jesus paints a different picture for us to grab hold of. Here, Jesus is in the midst of a "That ain't right" situation. He's hours away from being hauled off to court, unjustly beaten, mocked, and murdered.

Yet, instead of bemoaning his situation, Jesus states he had glory with the Father before the world began. "And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began."

This is a revolutionary truth that can set us free from worry, fear, and resentment, if we let it.

Let's take a closer look at this verse, phrase by phrase:

1. "Had glory" - In the Greek, this literally means "was having glory." In other words, Jesus was not given glory by the Father, instead he possessed it from all eternity. He was always possessing it.
2. "With you" - Jesus has the same glory, majesty, and power as God. He has fellowship with God.
3. "Before the world began" - Jesus preexisted this world. He is before time, eternal.
4. "Glorify me in your presence" - Jesus veiled his deity on earth so he could rescue us. Now he is glorified again.

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Pause for a moment and let that sink in. Actually STOP, CLOSE your eyes, and PICTURE it. Jesus had glory with the Father before the world began. Can you see him, clothed in majesty and glory? Can you see him dwelling in perfect union with the Father?

If we stop and take in this picture of Jesus it will transform us. Jesus is not our buddy, kind but weak. He is the eternal Lord of the universe, filled with power and glory. He is the Savior. We are not. We can relax, be obedient to what he is calling us to do, and leave the rest to him.

With this picture of Jesus, where is the place for worry?
Where is the place for fear?
Where is the place for resentment?

It is driven out by a BIG picture of Jesus, powerful enough to weave our lives and this world into a story of redemption fit for a King.

It melts away, leaving only freedom and courage in the midst of a world where “That ain’t right”.

Prayer: Jesus, please show us a BIG picture of you, and allow it to change the way we view this world and ourselves. Amen

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Friday, February 23 | Day 9

Today's Devotional comes from Denny Brandt

Scripture: *John 17:5: "And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed."*

"One of the most fascinating things you can do on this planet is try to understand the majesty of God and couple that with his love for you." - Francis Chan, Jesus's Farewell Message

Many of us have struggles, if not things we're deeply suffering through. What was Jesus' message to his disciples on handling life's challenges? How might we respond as disciples of Jesus who want to become more like Jesus? Today's verse from John 17 helps show us.

A few moments earlier, recorded in John 16:29, Jesus' plain language about himself had 'clicked' for the disciples. They said, "now we know that you know all things, and do not need anyone to question you; this is why we believe that you came from God." Then Jesus said, "I have said these things to you, that in me, you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." John 16:33.

In John 17, Jesus begins to pray. In verse 5, as Jesus continues his prayer he says, "And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence, with the glory that I had with you before the world existed." Just as John began his gospel declaring that Jesus was with God and was God from the beginning, Jesus is now stating that fact in his prayer.

Imagine being John and the other disciples. You've all just declared Jesus came from God, and you believe his every word. Then, Jesus promised you peace in tribulation. Finally, you witness Jesus praying to God the Father as his equal in his eternal glory. That sums up all any of us should need in life, right? Still, our human nature tends to forget God in the good times and wonder where God is in the bad times. My prayer is that together we would allow God to be all we need, all the time.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for these verses and what we learn as you said farewell to your disciples. I pray that you would bring us back to read and re-read your words. Help us understand your eternal majesty and love for us together as a church family. Whatever it takes, Lord, keep us dependent on you all the time. Amen.

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Saturday, February 24 | Day 10

Today's Devotional comes from Jim Blosser

Scripture: *John 17:6: "I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word."*

Tryouts. It seems like much of my life could be described as a series of "tryouts." Would my first-choice college accept my application? What about that selective graduate program? Would I be offered that job that looked so right for me? Will I get the promotion? Was I smart enough? Did I have the right experience; the right skill set? What about the quality of my performance? In short, I am always trying to measure up.

Jesus, in his prayer to the Father, says something at odds with my human experience: the Father gave the followers of Jesus (the disciples) to Jesus. I know this was not based on their merit. He says they came "out of the world" and John says earlier, "Yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him" (John 1:10-11). Paul puts it more starkly, "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked...But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ" (Ephesians 2:2-5).

Why did the Father give the disciples to Jesus? Jesus' words were heard by many people. But, for those that were given, they would keep God's word. But what is God's word? Isn't this the good news that Jesus spoke: "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life" (John 6:47-48). Peter later responds, "Lord, to whom [i.e. where else] shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God" (John 6:68-69).

What are the implications? On one hand we ask ourselves, are we keeping God's word? Are we all in for Jesus? Is He the Lord of all facets of our lives or do we keep some back just for us? Being given by God and keeping God's word also means purpose. In Ephesians 2:10 Paul tells us what that is: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Today I ask myself, how is God intending to use my life in this season of life? Am I being present to him, open to the opportunities that he provides for me? And how is that impacting the people with whom I come in contact? Can they see that Jesus makes all the difference in the world?

Jesus tells me I don't need to do tryouts anymore. I just need to be ready to step up to the plans he already has for me.