

40 DAYS OF PRAYER
LENT DEVOTIONAL

Week #5: March 11-16

Monday, March 11 | Day 23

Today's Devotional comes Champ Thornton

Scripture: John 17:15 - "I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one." (ESV)

Spiritual warfare. Fighting the devil. Pushing back the forces of darkness. As followers of Jesus Christ, we're soldiers in a bigger battle than we might imagine. We wrestle "against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12). But what does this look like in real life? In John 17, Jesus gives us a glimpse of spiritual warfare, and it's nothing like we see in movies. He prays, "I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one" (John 17:15 ESV).

Jesus asked the Father to "keep" or protect his followers. And this was nothing new. All during Jesus's earthly ministry, he had "kept" or guarded his disciples ([John 17:12](#)). So, when Jesus fought the devil and protected his followers, what did he do or say? Two passages reveal what spiritual warfare looked like for Jesus.

First, in [Matthew 16:21–23](#), Jesus tells his disciples that he was going to Jerusalem—not to be crowned king, but to die. Peter tells Jesus that this plan is outrageous. And Jesus rebukes Peter, saying "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me" (Matthew 16:23).

Peter's mindset was all-too-human. He essentially said: Jesus, don't you know that kings should reign in splendor and power!? But this was more than a human perspective; it was also Satanic. This was the lie the Enemy himself believed— "I will ascend; I will be like God!"

So what does Jesus do? How does he respond? No exorcism. No holy water. No magic words. Instead, Jesus used normal, everyday words to warn Peter about the demonic error he had unknowingly embraced. He protects Peter by rebuking him.

And then in Luke 22:31–32, Jesus protects Peter a second time. He warns: You're going to deny me. And this denial will also put Peter in terrible spiritual danger. Jesus said, "Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat." So how does Jesus protect in this situation?

Jesus says, "I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail" ([Luke 22:32](#)). Jesus prayed for Peter. Why? After all, Jesus is fully God. Couldn't he handle Satan himself? Yes, but Jesus is also fully human, and he sets our example. And God has chosen to use human prayer to accomplish divine plans. So Jesus prays, and by praying he protects his followers.

Today we still find protection from the devil through these ordinary activities. When a brother or sister at church takes time to confront us about something stupid we've said or done—isn't

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that the grace of Jesus guarding us from Satanic delusion? Or when someone takes time to pray for you, we know God hears and protects us. Through ordinary words, the Good Shepherd still protects his flock.

Prayer: Father, thank you for answering Jesus's prayer to protect us. Thank you for bringing into our lives faithful and loving words that guard us from the devil.

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Tuesday, March 12 | Day 24

Today's Devotional comes Ginny Zuber

Scripture: John 17:16 - "They are not of the world, even as I am not of it."

Believers are not of the world. How can we maintain our distinct identity as followers of Christ while living in the world?

My heart was dark with sin
Until the Savior came in
His precious blood I know
Has washed me white as snow
And in God's Word I'm told
I'll walk the street of gold
To grow in Christ each day
I read my Bible and pray

These are the lyrics to the children's song called The Wordless Book. Maybe like me, you began to sing the words as you read them? Even if you are not familiar with the lyrics, they point to our distinct identity as Christ followers, how our identity is changed through the washing and purifying work of God. And this amazing transformation can happen in a child's life!

This children's song is often followed up by a craft called The Story Bracelet. I enjoy crafts, because they help children understand the Gospel through an activity they can relate to, like making a bracelet. It is a beautiful experience to teach about the process of salvation through each color as we string beads and make bracelets with the colors black, red, white, gold, and green. As the Wordless Book song puts a melody to the Good News, the Story Bracelet is a way to share the Good News told by colors.

These simple examples remind us of all we have been studying in Jesus' prayer in John chapter 17. The disciples had been following Jesus in person. Now Jesus prays for them, that they would be strengthened for the days ahead, as He returns to the Father. Jesus makes a sharp distinction between His disciples and the world. The world hated Jesus and the world will hate the disciples. Jesus prays for their protection, but He makes it clear He is sending them into the world. He wants the disciples and all believers to be in the world but not of the world.

So how do we do that? Similar to how a craft helps a child understand the Good News, we have practical ways to experience and live out the Gospel. The green bead in the bracelet tells us "To grow in Christ each day read the Bible and pray." This is still a great discipline that helps us live set apart from the world. And it is a great place to start today. You have done well making it to day 24 in this devotional. Keep up the good work!

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This is a quote from The Wiersbe Bible Commentary about John 17:13-19 “True sanctification (being set apart for God) comes through the ministry of the Word of God. When you were saved, you were set apart for God. As you grow in your faith, you are more and more experiencing sanctification. You love sin less and you love God more. You want to serve him and be a blessing to others. All of this comes through the Word.” Like the green bead says, “read the Bible and pray.”

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help us to love sin less and love you more. May our lives reflect your love. Amen.

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Wednesday, March 13 | Day 25

Today's Devotional comes Sam Arthur

Scripture: John 17:17 - Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

To “sanctify” means to dedicate someone or something to God for a purpose; this is clear enough. But how does truth accomplish this? It would be simple for Jesus to just say to His disciples, “I pronounce you all sanctified – you’re employees of God from now on.” The fact that truth is presented as a sanctifying power suggests a process rather than a fiat.

Light and truth are related concepts in Jesus’ teaching. Light exposes facts – facts about us and about the world, both good and bad. Truth gives those facts meaning and purpose. This sort of truth is an all-encompassing truth – an existence immersed in all aspects of truth, vital and real in every way - not just isolated facts. This truth woos us to God as we increasingly comprehend both our extreme poverty of spirit and the contrasting goodness of God’s purposes for us.

However, this is not a painless process. In Jesus’ famous dialogue (John 18:37-38) just prior to his crucifixion, Pilate wasn’t having any of it: “You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.” “What is truth?” retorted Pilate.

Pilate’s position is that truth is irrelevant; all that matters is power. And in one sense, Pilate is attempting to live as if the truth is “fake news.” He is overlooking the fullness of the truth right in front of him.

But what then is this “word” that is identified with the truth? Well, it is true that scripture is the word. The scripture word describes the characters on the page that comprise a constellation of values and identity and purpose flowing from God’s recorded revelation of himself. But more importantly, the Son – Jesus himself – is referred to in the first chapter of John’s gospel as “the Word”, the power and purpose that the Father spoke into creation in the beginning. Jesus is both the source and the content of the truth.

So where does this leave us?

Truth reveals truth – in other words, the hard recognition of our need for truth allows God to apply the truth of his redemption. We need to continually guard against losing our nerve and looking away from the radical truth in Jesus that sanctifies and sets us free from the lies that would destroy us.

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Thursday, March 14 | Day 26

Today's Devotional comes Pastor Chip Timothy Santa Barbara

Scripture: John 17:18 - "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world."

Christ Came; Therefore We Go!

As we bear down on Resurrection Day, we are reminded of why Jesus came. Our verse today is, "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world." This should lead us to ask the questions, "Why did the Father send Him?" And "What does He expect from us as He sends us?"

First, why did the Father send Jesus into the world? In Luke 19:10 Jesus says, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." How was this accomplished? The gospel! Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; He was buried and rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures! ([1 Corinthians 15:3-4](#)). And this is what we celebrate on Resurrection Day!

If this is why God sent Jesus into the world, what then is His expectation of us as we are sent into the world? Jesus gives us the answer in Matthew 28:18-20, "All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

We have been sent into the world to seek and save the lost and be discipled (trained up in the truth of God's Word)! And this by the proclamation of the gospel and modeling a life that has been transformed by it! This takes on many forms but begins by recognizing we are on mission at all times as representatives of Christ as if God is making His appeal through us (see [2 Corinthians 5:20](#)). It may look like kind words to a stranger, delivering a meal to a neighbor we know is ill, serving the homeless at a shelter, attending local outreaches within the community, and many other similar examples. These loving actions are all means to a conversation about the gospel. After all, the gospel is the power of God unto salvation (see [Romans 1:16](#)). Jesus offers the gift of life, and that is what we offer people when we tell them of the redeeming work of our King. So, as Jesus came and brought life through His gospel, GO and offer life to the lost until He returns again!

MARANATHA! (Oh Lord, Come!)

With the Love of Christ,
The Santa Barbara Family

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Friday, March 15 | Day 27

Today's Devotional comes Michael Miller

Scripture: John 17:19 - For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

Jesus consecrates Himself, so that the disciples might be sanctified in truth. How does Jesus empower us to live set apart lives for the truth of the Gospel?

To be sanctified is to be set apart or declared holy; to be consecrated for that purpose. Jesus sanctified Himself (set Himself apart in a perfectly lived holy life), and through His mission He provided a way for His followers to be "truly sanctified."

How was Jesus set apart, and how does this set us apart, or make us holy?

Jesus sacrificed Himself as a holy and pure offering for His disciples and us! This provides salvation, and it also provides the power to live a truly sanctified life. A sanctified life is holy and set apart for God's purpose. We experience salvation, and we are given a mission.

Jesus empowers us to live a set apart life through the truth of the Gospel. Would you make sacrifices to show your faithfulness to God? Are there times you're going through something all alone and you think you will get through it on your own strength? The best part about it is that you don't get through it on your own!

Our creator is a loving, understanding and forgiving father. In light of His character, the work accomplished on the cross, and the deep forgiveness we receive, we are released (freed) and empowered to live like Him, to read the Bible, to pray, to spread the Gospel, and as we go, we continue to learn more and more. We are changed more and more as we follow the pattern of Jesus. Jesus set the pattern of sanctification, and then He sanctifies us! It's not a comfortable process, but it's a holy process.

Jesus, through His sacrifice, gives us the opportunity to be holy, and set apart for God. I gave up smoking, stealing, drinking and I gave up having a hateful heart. I didn't do this for my wellbeing. I did it in God's power and this revealed that God did not waste His creation. If it were my own doing, I would have wasted my life on selfishness. I praise God, and give him all the Glory, that He had a different and special plan for my family.

Less than a year ago, my whole family was baptized on the same day. And we're not looking back! He used His people, in the Broken Beginnings Ministry and in this church, to help us walk in something that I never understood. But now, I'm still learning. It's sanctification. As we serve Him together, He receives all the Glory for the change He has accomplished in each one.

Receive this prayer over your life today.

Jesus prayed: "Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending (my disciples) into the world. And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them, so they can be made holy by your mouth."
Amen.

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Lent Devotional Day 28 | Saturday, March 16

Today's Devotional comes Matt Dunn

Scripture: John 17:20 - "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message..."

Every night when putting our children to bed, we spend time praying as a family. Our oldest, Lizzie, has started to pray for the salvation of the people of the entire world. While this makes Lorraine and I chuckle some nights, think about the faith exhibited by this simple prayer that so clearly aligns with what Jesus was doing in today's verse. It is easy to get caught up in our "laundry list" of prayer items, but do we actively pray for the salvation of those around us? A part of Jesus' prayer here is that specific idea. He is praying for the salvation of those who will believe because of the testimony/message of other believers. How cool is that?!? For starters, Jesus here is praying for you and me. Two thousand years ago, He had us in mind when he prayed his final prayer.

Next, He prays that future believers will believe because of the message fellow believers share. The "message" here in the King James version is that of "words." In Greek, it is Logos which connects with the words we say. Our message is conveyed through our words and Jesus here is praying that our daily speech be one of sharing His gospel so it leads others to Him.

How often do we daily live out sharing the gospel or are we too afraid to? Put both truths together that Jesus is praying for here, first for the salvation of future believers and second for current believers to exhibit the "Logos" of the gospel. Just as our daughter prays for the salvation of the world, this child-like faith has a profound meaning. Let us be challenged to say a prayer for future believers and that we can be the hands and feet of Jesus to help lead others to Christ.