



Orlando Baptist Church

21 Days of Prayer

August 18 - September 7





“Being a Christian is more than just an instantaneous conversion; it is a daily process whereby you GROW to be more like Christ.”

- Billy Graham -

INTRODUCTION

As Christians, Spiritual GROWTH should be one of our greatest desires. *1 Peter 2:2* says, “Like newborn infants, desire the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may GROW up into your salvation...” Spiritual GROWTH is certainly supernatural, but it should not be unusual for followers of Jesus. One of our values as a church is: GROW Biblically. The Bible has much to say about Spiritual GROWTH. Over the next 21 Days, we will take a look at different passages of Scripture that address this topic.

The Bible often uses agricultural images to describe Spiritual GROWTH. We will see that we are called to be disciples of Jesus who are Rooted, Growing, and Bearing Fruit. Each of the three weeks of our 21 Days of Prayer will focus on one of these three elements of our Spiritual GROWTH. We are praying for you as you join us on this journey of prayer and studying God’s Word. May the Lord GROW you in your faith.



SMALL GROUPS OF PRAYER TIME

FEEL FREE TO JOIN ANY OF THESE GROUPS
ON THESE SPECIFIC DATES & TIMES

Monday Mornings for women @ 9am
Starbucks @ Michigan & Semoran | led by Sara
8/18, 8/25, 9/1

Wednesday Mornings @ 11am
Church Lobby | led by OBC Staff
8/20, 8/27, 9/3

Thursday Mornings for men @ 7:30am
Starbucks @ Michigan & Semoran | led by Dustin
8/21, 8/28, 9/4

Thursday Mornings for women @ 9:30am
Starbucks @ Michigan & Semoran | led by Brooke
8/21, 8/28, 9/4

Friday Mornings for women @ 9am
Dunkin Donuts @ Alafaya & Curry Ford | led by Sunda
8/22, 8/29, 9/5

Saturday Mornings @ 9am
Church Lobby | led by Dustin
8/23, 8/30, 9/6



Day 1

Monday - August 18

Psalm 1:1-6

“Putting Down Roots” - Dustin Janney

1 How happy is the one who does not walk in the advice of the wicked or stand in the pathway with sinners or sit in the company of mockers! 2 Instead, his delight is in the LORD's instruction, and he meditates on it day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted beside flowing streams that bears its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. 4 The wicked are not like this; instead, they are like chaff that the wind blows away. 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand up in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. 6 For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to ruin.

I think we can all agree that we would like to be like the individual in this Psalm: happy and blessed, prospering and bearing fruit. This is the life we all long for. I love the picture of the tree that is planted by the water. In other words, the tree is close to the source of life that it needs to grow and flourish; its roots go down deep into the life-giving water.

If we want to grow in our spiritual life as God intends, we must also be deeply rooted in the source of life. This Psalm tells us how we can do that: by delighting in and meditating on God's Word of instruction. The individual who does this is contrasted with those who look to worldly pleasures or wisdom to satisfy them and cause them to grow.

Have you ever heard the phrase, “Putting down roots”? Usually we use this phrase to describe someone who is making their home in a specific place or making a commitment to stay somewhere for a while. We live in a transient culture where we are constantly looking for what's new and what's next.

We seldom put down roots. This is also true in our faith. We might try it for a little while, but we don't want to make the commitment it takes to really put down roots.

The result of this is that we live in a culture that is never satisfied. The Psalm describes the individuals who live this way as being like chaff, or like a dried up plant or tumbleweed that is blown around by the wind. Have you ever felt that way? Have you been going from thing to thing searching for what will finally make you happy and blessed? Today, I want to challenge you to look to the source. Over the next 21 Days, begin to delight in and meditate on God's Word. Put your roots down deep into the source of life. I promise you will be happy you did!

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Confess areas where you have been: walking in the worldly advice, or standing with sinners, or sitting with mockers.
- Ask God to help you delight in and meditate on His Word.
- Thank God for watching over you and giving you life.
- Ask God to do this work throughout our church body.

[illegible]



Day 2

Tuesday - August 19

Psalm 1:1-6

“Dry Seasons” - Dustin Janney

1 How happy is the one who does not walk in the advice of the wicked or stand in the pathway with sinners or sit in the company of mockers! 2 Instead, his delight is in the LORD's instruction, and he meditates on it day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted beside flowing streams that bears its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. 4 The wicked are not like this; instead, they are like chaff that the wind blows away. 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand up in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. 6 For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to ruin.

We are going to take another look at Psalm 1 today. One of the principles that we see in this Psalm is the principle of seasons. King Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes 3:1: *“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven...”* When we think of trees and plants, we recognize that there are seasons of growth and seasons of dormancy. Even in Florida, not everything grows year round.

The same is true in our spiritual lives. Not every season is a season of fruitfulness. The promise here is that we will bear fruit in season... not continually. However, the other promise here is that even though we might not bear fruit in every season, we will not wither. In other words even in dry seasons, God is still sustaining us and working on us from the inside out.

The Apostle Paul puts it this way in 2 Corinthians 4:8-9, 16
“We are afflicted in every way but not crushed; we are perplexed but not in despair; we are persecuted but not abandoned; we are struck down but not destroyed... Therefore we do not give up. Even though our outer person is being destroyed, our inner person is being renewed day by day.”

Even in the seasons of trial, God is working to grow us and mature us. Maybe you are in a dry season right now, or even a season of trial and difficulty. I want to encourage you that God is still working to grow you. Continue to seek Him. Continue to delight in and meditate on His Word. There are many plants whose roots grow deeper and stronger during dry seasons as they seek water. The same can be true for us as we continue to seek the Lord. As your roots grow down deep into the source of life, you will continue to thrive even through seasons of difficulty.

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Think about dry or difficult seasons in your life when the Lord brought growth, and then thank Him for those seasons.
 - Ask God to help you stay rooted in Him through the dry seasons.
 - Pray for others who are in a dry, difficult season.
 - Pray for the pastors and leaders of our church.
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Day 3
Wednesday - August 20
John 15:1-8
Don Jacobson

1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 Every branch in me that does not produce fruit he removes, and he prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me. 6 If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you. 8 My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples.

If there's one thing I've learned over my life, it's that growth takes time. It requires patience and a good foundation. Growth occurs beneath the soil, where it is invisible - in the growth of the roots. If you're anything like me, you want to see results pretty quickly. You want to see the fruit. However, before that can happen, specific internal changes must occur first.

Jesus' analogy of the vine and branches aligns with the model of internal growth leading to external fruit. He tells us that if we do not put our roots (the part of the plant that gives life) in Him, we cannot be a part of the vine. We would be cut off from Christ.

And even if we DO put our faith in Jesus, we will be "pruned". If you've been through a season where God has allowed you to walk through a difficult season of life and abided in Him, you will see your faith grow and strengthen as a result. To "abide" means to remain in a close relationship with Jesus, drawing strength and guidance from Him.

Strength and guidance are both internal motivators. What you set your mind on is what drives the fruit you will bear. I'm reminded of the verse found in James 4:8 - *"Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you."*

I think another way we can say this is to be rooted in Christ.

If you are not rooted in Him, you will try to find "success" in the things of this world. Focusing our lives (roots) on things like money, power, and relationships will ultimately lead us away from the vine. If we have no lasting foundation, we don't grow closer to Him, and we can't bear fruit. And so Jesus is asking us, "Is your faith rooted in me, or rooted in man?" Grace and peace to you.

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Reflect on times that you have relied on Christ to get you through a season of trials. Praise Him for His strength in your time of weakness.
- Ask God to examine your motivations and reveal what you need to cut out of your life.
- Look at your schedule and make time to spend time in the Word and prayer. Even if it means cancelling something else. Use this time to draw closer to Him.



Day 4
Thursday - August 21
Romans 11:16-18
Eddie Hickle

Now if the firstfruits are holy, so is the whole batch. And if the root is holy, so are the branches. ¹⁷ Now if some of the branches were broken off, and you, though a wild olive branch, were grafted in among them and have come to share in the rich root¹⁸ of the cultivated olive tree, ¹⁸ do not boast that you are better than those branches. But if you do boast—you do not sustain the root, but the root sustains you.

Even though the tension between believers Jews and Gentiles addressed in Romans 11 isn't seemingly relevant today, the simple truth here is still important for you and I. When life is going okay, and all seems to be trending upward, the basis of the Gospel can be easily forgotten. God is the holy root of your faith, and like the wild olive branch that was grafted into a tree that it did not originally stem from, you have been joined to the family of God that was promised to Abraham in Genesis. Being rooted is being reminded that in God's loving-kindness, your faith is given as a gift of God, "*not from works so that no one can boast*" (Ephesians 2:9).

Often, our circumstances fool us into believing we have somehow earned God's favor or are more deserving of God's grace. Have you, like me, ever thought to yourself, "Thank God I'm not like them"? This passing thought of judgment or contemptuous pity proves that we struggle to avoid boasting. But there is no place for spiritual arrogance and pride in God's kingdom because He is the source of your life, both spiritually and physically. He is the ultimate sustainer from the first breath you take in, to the last one you breathe out, and every moment in between. Every day you get to live your life is a day of grace in the Lord.

Paul says that while not all will share in the rich root like you and I, we should not be arrogant. Instead, you are to cultivate a heart of gratitude for God’s gracious and loving kindness towards you - keeping you from being conceited. Only when we are rooted in our faith can we experience Biblical growth and fruitfulness.

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Thank the Lord for grafting you in, and that He is the root of your faith.
- Ask God to help you display His kindness toward you in having compassion toward others, instead of arrogance or conceit.



Day 5
Friday - August 22
Ephesians 3:16-19
Brooke Janney

I pray that he may grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power in your inner being through his Spirit, 17 and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. I pray that you, being rooted and firmly established in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and width, height and depth of God's love, 19 and to know Christ's love that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Love: for a parent, unconditional love flows freely to their children; it is effortless. From the time little ones are babies, all the way until they are well into adulthood, parents invest in their children's lives; they deeply care about what happens with them and to them.

Love for a spouse is different from love for a child. It's more of an unconditional choice. You meet someone and fall in love, and then make vows to that person, and suddenly you are rooted in love with that person. Come what may through life's ups and downs, you made a choice to stay tethered to that person through thick and thin. Some days, it's easy to love and it comes in abundant supply. Other days, it is nothing but a choice to love, and seems more like a river that has started to run dry.

In verse 17, Paul encourages new believers in the church to be "rooted and firmly established in love." The word love here in Greek is the word *agape*. *Agape* love is neither a family love nor a romantic love. *Agape* love reaches out beyond those close relationships. *Agape* love is not based on feelings; it is not limited to specific relationships - it is not based on merit - it is not selfish - it is not conditional - and it is not a passive emotion.

It is seeking the best in other people, given freely even to enemies, focused on the well-being of the other person, consistent and enduring, and is expressed through actions.

Paul is praying that believers be rooted in this *agape* love so that they may be able to comprehend with all the saints (other believers) the length and width, height and depth of God’s (*agape*) love for us; and to know Christ’s (*agape*) love that surpasses knowledge.

Did you know God loves you with a perfect *agape* love? And He calls you to love people (even those outside of your close friends and family) with an *agape* love? Saints, that is the love we are called to. This will cause others to take notice, but also it will help our minds and hearts understand God’s love more fully. When we are rooted like that, the overflow is beautiful, pure, and contagious. Who can you show *agape* love to today?

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Pray that you will be firmly rooted and established in *agape* love for others.
- Thank God that He loves you with a perfect *agape* love.
- Pray that our church will be known for the *agape* love we have for each other.



Day 6

Saturday - August 23

Colossians 2:6-7

“Rooted, Built Up, Established, and Overflowing” - Cory Cooper

So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to walk in him, ⁷ being rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and overflowing with gratitude.

“Continue to walk in Him”

Think back to the moment of your salvation, when you received Christ Jesus as Lord. How old were you? Where were you? Who was with you? Though you may not have been able to explain everything, Scripture says you went from spiritual death to spiritual life in Christ. An acorn was planted, and that acorn began to sprout. Continuing to walk in Christ is similar to receiving Christ; they both require Jesus to be Lord.

“Rooted, Built up, Established”

As we continue to walk, the seed of faith grows—the acorn sprouts, growing roots. The roots grow and the tree grows, being built up over time. The bigger and stronger the roots, the more “established” that tree becomes. Spiritual growth takes time, just like it takes decades for an acorn to become a mighty oak tree. But the “how” is simple. Continue to walk in Him, which means daily surrender (Romans 12:1), and allow the Holy Spirit to build you up over time into a mighty oak that weathers the hurricanes of life and “overflows” with acorns and gratitude.

“Overflowing with gratitude.”

I have a 4-year-old and a 2-year-old who like to fill up their own water cups, so I am an expert on overflow. An empty vessel cannot overflow. 50 percent? No. 75 percent? Nope. Not even 99.9 percent. To overflow, the substance must exceed the vessel’s capacity.

Gratitude fills up the cup little by little. The more we acknowledge God’s blessings and thank Him for them, the more they fill us up.

Paul is telling us to keep walking in Christ, to keep growing, to keep thanking God for the small blessings and the big victories, until our joy and gratitude spill out of us for our good and God’s glory.

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Take a moment to praise God for saving you.
- Specifically confess any area(s) of your life that need to be surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus.
- Thank the Lord for the people who have taught you how to follow Jesus.
- Find a spot in this booklet, or grab a piece of paper, and write down something or someone you are grateful for. Tomorrow, add 1 more. I challenge you to add to this list every day of 21 days of prayer. Thank the Lord each day for the blessings on the list. This will fill you up, and I pray you overflow with gratitude.



Day 7
Sunday - August 24
I Peter 1:22-25
Stacy Cawley

Since you have purified yourselves by your obedience to the truth, so that you show sincere brotherly love for each other, from a pure heart love one another constantly, 23 because you have been born again—not of perishable seed but of imperishable—through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For all flesh is like grass, and all its glory like a flower of the grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, 25 but the word of the Lord endures forever. And this word is the gospel that was proclaimed to you.

Right before Jesus predicts Peter's denial of Him, He says in John 13:34-35: *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

So it's no surprise that 30 years later, Peter clearly remembers Jesus' command and shares it with believers in Asia Minor as a road map for spiritual growth.

First, obey the truth. Which truth? God's truth that Jesus is the Messiah and He laid down His life for us.

Second, purify yourselves. We know it's not ourselves but the Spirit living in us that purifies us. Why should we be purified? Because it is God's desire that we reflect His love.

Third, love one another sincerely. Even with the Spirit, loving one another deeply, genuinely, honestly, wholeheartedly and fervently sometimes seems like an impossible task.

So how can we love others? Peter quotes Isaiah 40, reminding us that we — and our righteousness — are like the grass and the flowers of the field, but then he reveals our strength. We are born again from an imperishable seed, through the living Word of God.

We don't grow spiritually because of our own power. We grow spiritually through Jesus Christ, the Word of God, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in us.

Because of Him we can love each other in spirit and in truth. And when we do, the whole world will know that we are children and followers of God pointing them back to Him!

PRAYER PROMPTS

- How can you intentionally rely on the Holy Spirit's power to love others?
- What are some practical ways you can show love to others this week?
- Think about the contrast between our perishable physical bodies and our imperishable souls. Which do you focus on more, and how does that affect how you love others?
- Family dynamics with kids and teens sometimes feel more like a battlefield than a circle of love. How are you doing with demonstrating your love for your spouse, your kids, and your parents? How could you love them better?



Day 8
Monday - August 25
I Corinthians 3:6-9
Don Jacobson

I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. ⁷ So, then, neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. ⁸ Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. ⁹ For we are God's coworkers. You are God's field, God's building.

Does anyone else, like me, have an uncanny ability to kill plants? I'm pretty sure some plastic plants have died while under my care. I can only think of one plant that actually survived longer than expected. It was a succulent that someone gave me at my office. I was faithful to water it twice a week. It did so well that the person who gave me the plant had to take it home to repot it. I was so proud!

But here's the rub ... I didn't make that plant grow. Today's passage is reminding us that we have work to do. I tell you that, in all my years as a believer, I've never saved anyone. I don't have the power to do that. It's not even my responsibility to do that. Salvation only happens through the supernatural power of God. My job (our jobs) is to plant seeds. To water plants. To plant the seeds of the hope of Jesus. To water fellow believers with the living water. To be encouraging when someone needs encouragement. To love others. To be gracious. To walk alongside someone who is struggling. To be "God's fellow workers."

And when we do that, when we are obedient to our call and we understand the responsibility that God has given us, we will receive the rewards and blessings according to our faithfulness. In other words, we grow in the faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ! And the best part is that we get to see all that God is doing, not only in our own lives, but also in the lives of others around us. We get to be part of a community of believers who are also growing in their faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ! Grace and peace to you.

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Make a list of people in your life who have planted seeds or helped you grow spiritually. Thank God for them being in your life.
- Is there someone in your life right now that you can share the Gospel with?
- Ask God to show you ways that you can be His fellow workers in your home and jobs. Ask for confidence and clarity to act faithfully in these circumstances.



Day 9
Tuesday - August 26
Mark 4:26-29
Amanda Welch

“The kingdom of God is like this,” he said. “A man scatters seed on the ground. 27 He sleeps and rises night and day; the seed sprouts and grows, although he doesn’t know how. 28 The soil produces a crop by itself—first the blade, then the head, and then the full grain on the head. 29 As soon as the crop is ready, he sends for the sickle, because the harvest has come.”

As an English teacher, I LOVE digging into the parables, analogies, and word pictures that Jesus used in His teachings. Some of my favorites are His teachings on plants, harvesting, vines, etc. This specific parable intrigues me, and it truly has me thinking about GROWTH as it pertains to me as a follower of Christ.

What do I see literally in this parable?

- “A man scatters seeds.”
- He goes about his business. “Sleeps and rises night and day”
- “The seed sprouts and grows”.
- The man “doesn’t know how”.
- The soil produces the crop “by itself”.
- When the crop is ready, the man begins to harvest.

What do I see figuratively in this parable? (Word pictures/analogies)

- The “man” is Christians, followers of Jesus.
- The “seed” is the Gospel.
- The “soil” is the Holy Spirit.

So, how does this parable apply to me?

- As a Christian, I am called to scatter “seed”: share the Gospel. Notice that this was the man’s day to day. It is active obedience to the Great Commission. Growth comes from sharing the Gospel as a part of my DAILY life!

- When I share the Gospel, the Holy Spirit does the work! I don't know the outcome of that "seed", and I don't need to. I am only called to "scatter the seed"; the Holy Spirit does the rest. C.H Spurgeon said, *"Seed once sown is beyond human jurisdiction and is under Divine care"*. Growth comes from realizing that my responsibility is to share the Gospel, then let the Holy Spirit do the rest! What a relief!
- When I obey the Great Commission and share the Gospel, I could be planting "seeds", watering "seeds", or harvesting what the Holy Spirit's "soil" has been growing! What an honor! What a privilege! Growth happens when I focus on obedience and not outcomes!
- All in all, growth happens in MY Christian life because of my investment in sharing the Gospel with OTHERS!

"I beg your prayers, my dear and faithful Friends, this afternoon and this evening, that the Words of the Lord may be divinely victorious! I stand back that God may work and then come forward that God may work through me—and to Him be praise forever! Amen." - C.H. Spurgeon

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Confess to the Lord any hesitancies or reluctances of sharing the Gospel with others.
- Ask the Lord for boldness in sharing the Gospel in your day to day life: coworkers, family, friends, complete strangers, etc.
- Ask the Lord to help you focus on the obedience in sharing the Gospel with others and NOT the outcomes.
- Ask the Lord to grow in you a LOVE for sharing the Gospel!



Day 10
Wednesday - August 27
John 15:1-8
Aaryn Marquardt

1 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 Every branch in me that does not produce fruit he removes, and he prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me. 6 If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you. 8 My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples.

I don't know much about taking care of plants, but the little I do know is that plants need the right amount of water and sun to grow. For long term growth, the plant also must be pruned – branches must be cut off to keep the plant healthy. It seems a little counterintuitive to cut something back or trim it down for it to grow, yet it is through that process that the plant continues to flourish.

Sometimes the gardener prunes because the branches are sick or unhealthy, sometimes it's to improve the plant's appearance, and sometimes he prunes a perfectly good branch so the plant can produce more fruit. I would argue that it's most likely done for a combination of all the above, with the gardener's main motive being what's best for the plant's health and growth.

Jesus didn't use the illustration of a gardener pruning a plant on accident.

It's a perfect illustration for how the journey of becoming more like Him will be. The branch's job is to stay attached to the True Vine, and the gardener's job is to prune. As we read in the verses above, no branch is exempt because *every branch must be cut back for greater growth*. Sometimes God needs to cut out the sick, dying, and sinful things in us. But sometimes, He trims a perfectly healthy branch so we will grow to be more like Him and to bear more fruit.

I don't know what you are facing today. Maybe God is asking you to give up a pet sin you've been carrying and cut that branch off for good. Maybe you are facing financial, relational, or health trials that He is using to prune back your self-reliance and pride or maybe asking you to give up a perfectly good season to grow you in new ways. Whatever the reason, cling to the True Vine and trust the Good Gardener to do His perfect work in your life, for it's in the pruning that we grow to be more like our Savior.

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Praise God for His love and care for you that He doesn't leave you as you are, but is actively involved in pruning and shaping you to be like Him.
- Ask God to reveal any sin or unfruitful branches that need to be pruned and confess them.
- Pray that God will anchor your life to the True Vine and increase your faith to trust His pruning now or when it may come.
- Ask God to continue to prune and grow His Bride as we reflect Christ to the world around us.



Day 11

Thursday - August 28

Mark 4:13-20

“How’s Your Soil?” - Dustin Janney

Then he said to them, “Don’t you understand this parable? How then will you understand all of the parables? 14 The sower sows the word. 15 Some are like the word sown on the path. When they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word sown in them. 16 And others are like seed sown on rocky ground. When they hear the word, immediately they receive it with joy. 17 But they have no root; they are short-lived. When distress or persecution comes because of the word, they immediately fall away. 18 Others are like seed sown among thorns; these are the ones who hear the word, 19 but the worries of this age, the deceitfulness of wealth, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. 20 And those like seed sown on good ground hear the word, welcome it, and produce fruit thirty, sixty, and a hundred times what was sown.”

The parable of the Seed and the Sower is one of the most well known parables that Jesus uses in the Gospels. We are going to take two days to look at this little story. Jesus first tells the story at the beginning of Mark chapter one, then later the disciples ask him to explain it. We are looking at Jesus’ explanation which starts in verse thirteen.

Jesus says, “*The sower sows the Word.*” How are you responding to the Word of God that has been planted in your heart? Let’s consider what we are told about the soils which represent the state of our heart. It is easy to assume that our heart is the good soil in the story, but today, let’s take a closer look, asking the Lord to help us see.

In the first soil, the seed is snatched away before it ever begins to grow. This happens when we are dismissive of the truth of God’s Word, and prefer to listen to the advice of the world and people who mock God.

Maybe you find yourself rolling your eyes at the truth of Scripture sometimes as backward or naive. If so, ask God to soften your heart.

The next soil is described as rocky. There is an initial excitement about God’s Word, but there are no roots. Last week we considered the importance of being rooted. Without spending time in God’s Word our faith won’t last. Similarly, the third soil receives the Word at first, but then allows the things of this world to choke out the truth of the Gospel. What are you giving your time and attention to that would replace the importance of God’s truth in your life? Could it be success, recreation, social media, comparison to others, bitterness, apathy, control... Whatever it might be, confess it to God, and ask for His help to tend the soil of your heart today.

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Confess areas where you are not allowing the Word to take root or grow in your life. Ask the Spirit to help you identify them.
- Thank God for allowing the Word to be planted in your heart.
- Ask God to soften the hearts of others to receive His word too.



Day 12

Friday - August 29

Mark 4:13-20

“One Hundred Times” - Dustin Janney

Then he said to them, “Don’t you understand this parable? How then will you understand all of the parables? 14 The sower sows the word. 15 Some are like the word sown on the path. When they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word sown in them. 16 And others are like seed sown on rocky ground. When they hear the word, immediately they receive it with joy. 17 But they have no root; they are short-lived. When distress or persecution comes because of the word, they immediately fall away. 18 Others are like seed sown among thorns; these are the ones who hear the word, 19 but the worries of this age, the deceitfulness of wealth, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. 20 And those like seed sown on good ground hear the word, welcome it, and produce fruit thirty, sixty, and a hundred times what was sown.”

Today, we will take another look at this parable. I hope you took some time yesterday to ask the Lord to help you identify areas of your life where you need to tend the soil of your heart. During this week we have been considering what it looks like to grow. We see in this story that growth starts with the planting of seeds, and the seed in this story is the Word of God. I hope you have been growing through these 21 Days of Prayer in your love for the Word, and I pray it is taking root more deeply in your heart and life. There is an incredible promise of growth in this parable for those who hear the word and welcome it - Thirty - Sixty - One Hundred Times Growth!

I love the incredible promise of growth in this passage. To be sure, God is the one who causes growth in our lives, but we must participate and submit to His work in us so that we can experience His promise. I want to ask you to consider what this kind of growth would look like in your life.

If you immediately think of career, social, or financial growth, you are missing the point. You might need to go back to yesterday’s reading and ask God to help you deal with those things.

The growth that Jesus promises is spiritual growth. Are there specific areas where you would like to grow to look more like Jesus in your attitudes and actions? Are there stubborn sins that you are having a hard time getting past? What would it look like if you began to pray specifically for growth in those areas? Maybe you could begin to ask God to grow your joy or contentment. Maybe you need to ask Him to grow your peace or patience. Maybe you need Him to help you replace your fear with faith. Whatever it is, He can do it! So ask Him to grow you: thirty - sixty - one hundred times!

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Take a moment to confess areas where you need to grow spiritually.
- Ask God to help you grow in those areas. BE SPECIFIC!
- Thank God that He DOES provide growth in our lives.
- Ask God for specific areas of growth for your family and friends.



Day 13

Saturday - August 30

Isaiah 55

“Abundant Life” - Bob Caraballo

“Come, everyone who is thirsty, come to the water; and you without silver, come, buy, and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without silver and without cost! 2 Why do you spend silver on what is not food, and your wages on what does not satisfy Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and you will enjoy the choicest of foods. 3 Pay attention and come to me; listen, so that you will live. I will make a permanent covenant with you on the basis of the faithful kindnesses of David. 4 Since I have made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples, 5 so you will summon a nation you do not know, and nations who do not know you will run to you. For the Lord your God, even the Holy One of Israel, has glorified you.” 6 Seek the Lord while he may be found; call to him while he is near.

7 Let the wicked one abandon his way and the sinful one his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, so he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will freely forgive. 8 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not my ways.” This is the Lord’s declaration. 9 “For as heaven is higher than earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. 10 For just as rain and snow fall from heaven and do not return there without saturating the earth and making it germinate and sprout, and providing seed to sow and food to eat, 11 so my word that comes from my mouth will not return to me empty, but it will accomplish what I please and will prosper in what I send it to do.” 12 You will indeed go out with joy and be peacefully guided; the mountains and the hills will break into singing before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. 13 Instead of the thornbush, a cypress will come up, and instead of the brier, a myrtle will come up; this will stand as a monument for the Lord, an everlasting sign that will not be destroyed.

Jesus said that He came to give life and life more abundantly. As we read this chapter, we see some wonderful truths regarding abundant life.

Are you thirsty? You are invited to come to the waters. Are you hungry? You can come and eat. You can do this without worrying. God wants to bless us. He delights in making sure our needs are met every day.

All you need to do is seek Him. He is near and wants to meet you right where you are. If you have drifted away, He is calling you by name. His ways are not our ways, they are higher than we could ever imagine. God is calling you by name and wants you to walk in His abundance.

If you seek Him, you will go out with joy and be led out with peace. That is my prayer for us today. That we may walk in joy and peace. That the mountains and the hills should break out in song and the trees will clap as together we lift our combined praise to our great God.

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Confess areas where you have not been as close to God as you should.
- Ask God to give you a new song to sing.
- Thank God for allowing us to sing and worship our BIG GOD.
- Lift up our church so that we can be unified in our Worship.



Day 14
Sunday - August 31
Ephesians 4:11-16
Brooke Janney

And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness. 14 Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. 15 But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into him who is the head—Christ. 16 From him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building itself up in love by the proper working of each individual part.

Coveting another person's spiritual growth has no place in the Kingdom of God. This truth can be a hard pill for us to swallow sometimes. We look at others with envy for what they're accomplishing, how many people they are impacting, or how perfect they seem to be leading their family. Or perhaps, we are in a "behind the scenes" role, when we really want to be up front and recognized.

When it comes to growing in our faith, and building the Kingdom of God, He calls us into something so much bigger and better than our small-minded wants and desires. When we fully embrace the role God has us in RIGHT NOW, we reach a stronger unity and maturity; unity with our fellow church family, and maturity in our spiritual growth.

If we can come to a place where we applaud others' gifts, talents, and roles in ministry, while being perfectly content and at ease with where God has us at this moment, we become steadfast in Him, and are on our way to becoming spiritual adults. As verse 14 says, *“then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit.”* And friends, there is a lot of human cunning and techniques of deceit in our world today!

Remain rooted in Christ so that you can be content with what God has you doing right now, so that you can keep growing in your relationship with Him and your unity in the church!

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to convict you of any areas you are looking at others with covetousness or jealousy, and seek forgiveness.
- Ask God for help in any areas of your life where you are lacking contentment.
- Pray for unity within our church family.



Day 15
Monday - September 1
John 15:1-8
Eddie Hickie

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 Every branch in me that does not produce fruit he removes, and he prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me. 6 If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you. 8 My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples.

John 15 opens with Jesus describing Himself as the "true vine", and it most clearly presents the theme of fruitfulness in the life of a Christian, as proof of someone who is His true disciple. To be known as a follower of Jesus is to be someone who is producing fruit. This fruit does not come from our hard work and "stick-to-it" kind of efforts, but is necessarily and exclusively produced when attached to the vine. Fruit is born as you remain or "abide" in him, and when we do, His words will remain in you.

Inwardly, fruit in your life is being filled with the Word, that is Christ (John 1:1), resulting in your personal transformation and conformity into Christlikeness and choosing to live His way. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in your inner being - inner change that makes outward change possible, and is impossible to achieve on our own.

Outwardly, fruit in your life can look like many things. It can be loving on someone who needs it or having patience in the loud and difficult moment. It can be showing mercy and forgiveness for the person who did you wrong, or self control in temptations where there's opportunity for sin. It can be repentance and faithfulness to turn back to God when we've chosen our own way, or showing gentleness and kindness to a hardened heart.

Jesus also gives a warning for the nominal Christian (in name only), who shows no real evidence of the abiding work and conformity to Him. They are a fruitless branch that the Father removes and ultimately is thrown into the fire. Make no mistake that Jesus is talking about ultimate and divine judgement.

To be a fruitless branch means you are not a true disciple of Jesus. To be a true disciple of Jesus means there is real evidence in your life that you are remaining and abiding in Him, becoming like Him, and doing as He did. That is a life that glorifies God, in our loving obedience to Him for the sake of others.

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Thank the Lord that Jesus is the true vine we can anchor our lives to, and be His true disciples.
- Pray that you would remain in Him, and His words would remain in you.
- Meditate and ask how you can become more like Jesus.
- Ask the Lord to make you fruitful and bring glory to Him.



Day 16

Tuesday - September 2

Colossians 1:9-10

“Bearing Fruit in Every Good Work” - Cory Cooper

9 For this reason also, since the day we heard this, we haven't stopped praying for you. We are asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, 10 so that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God,

The term Christian, which means “little Christ,” was first heard in Antioch to mock the followers of Jesus. This became a badge of honor, and it is used to describe us to this day. Paul is writing to the church in Colossae, believers that he has never met. He has only heard of their faith and their growth in Christ. Before Paul addresses issues and encourages these new believers in this letter, he lets them know that he has been praying for them. In this prayer he describes the kind of life that gets noticed by the world for being different, a life that is “worthy of the Lord and fully pleasing to him.” Christians who by God’s power (Colossians 1:11):

- Bear fruit in every good work
- Grow in the knowledge of God

I enjoy working hard to read and study and learn about God. I love ministry, and commit myself to serve others. The long term issues arise when I focus on my contributions more than I focus on the power of God. Notice in our passage that verse 10 begins with a specific phrase: “*so that.*” In order to walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, we need the Holy Spirit to continually grow and empower us.

To fill us with the knowledge of God’s will. To fill us with wisdom and understanding, “so that” by God’s strength and power we are effective for His kingdom. We please God most when we fully depend on Him.

John Piper writes:
“When we depend upon man, we get what man can do; but when we depend upon prayer, we get what God can do.”

Prayer is good work. Prayer bears fruit in us and in others. Prayer grows our knowledge of God. Prayer pleases God our Father.

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Confess any specific sin in your life that is hindering you from walking worthy of the Lord.
- Pray for yourself: ask that God would fill you up to (1) understand God’s will, (2) gain spiritual wisdom, (3) honor and please God, (4) produce fruit in every kind of good work, and (5) grow to know God more and more.
- Who do you want to see grow spiritually?
- Pray for them by name: ask that God would fill them up to (1) understand God’s will, (2) gain spiritual wisdom, (3) honor and please God, (4) produce fruit in every kind of good work, and (5) grow to know God more and more.
- Take a moment to text that person that you prayed for them.



Day 17

Wednesday - September 3

Galatians 5:22-26

“Walk Free, & Bear Fruit” - Josh Zuniga

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things.[a] 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

The apostle Paul gives us a contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. While sin flows naturally from our broken human nature, the fruit of the Spirit grows supernaturally as we surrender to God’s presence and power. Paul uses the word “fruit”, NOT “fruits”. Reminding us that the Spirit forms a unified, Spirit-shaped life, not a list of traits to achieve by effort.

This fruit forms in three different areas:

- *Godward: Love that gives when it’s hard. Joy that remains even in sorrow. Peace that steadies you in the storm.*
- *Relational: Patience with difficult people. Kindness that offers grace, not retaliation. Goodness that chooses righteousness, even when no one is watching.*
- *Internal: Faithfulness that keeps showing up. Gentleness that does not need to flex. Self-control that says “yes” to God over cravings.*

You can't glue fruit onto a dead tree and call it alive. Real fruit grows from real life, and that life is the Spirit of God in you. If the Spirit has given you new life, your call is to walk in step with Him, step by step, choice by choice. That's where transformation happens.

But there's a warning: *don't grow fruit to impress. Grow fruit to share.* This world is starving for the kind of life only Jesus can give, one that looks like Him!

Let today be the day you stop striving and start surrendering. Let the Spirit lead, and watch the fruit grow. Be rooted in The Word, not the world. Don't forget: GOOD ROOT = GOOD FRUIT.

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Lord, reveal where I'm trying to change myself instead of surrendering to Your Spirit.
- Holy Spirit, grow in me the kind of love, joy, and peace that doesn't depend on my circumstances.
- God, help me walk in patience and kindness with the people who test me the most.
- Jesus, crucify the part of me that still wants control, and teach me to walk freely and faithfully with You.



Day 18
Thursday - September 4
Psalm 92
Tiffany Hickie

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praise to your name, Most High, 2 to declare your faithful love in the morning and your faithfulness at night, 3 with a ten-stringed harp and the music of a lyre. 4 For you have made me rejoice, Lord, by what you have done; I will shout for joy because of the works of your hands. 5 How magnificent are your works, Lord, how profound your thoughts! 6 A stupid person does not know, a fool does not understand this: 7 though the wicked sprout like grass and all evildoers flourish, they will be eternally destroyed. 8 But you, Lord, are exalted forever. 9 For indeed, Lord, your enemies— indeed, your enemies will perish; all evildoers will be scattered. 10 You have lifted up my horn like that of a wild ox; I have been anointed with the finest oil. 11 My eyes look at my enemies; when evildoers rise against me, my ears hear them. 12 The righteous thrive like a palm tree and grow like a cedar tree in Lebanon. 13 Planted in the house of the Lord, they thrive in the courts of our God. 14 They will still bear fruit in old age, healthy and green, 15 to declare, “The Lord is just; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.”

The Psalmist begins with giving thanks to the Lord and singing praises to the Lord’s name because of His works. The Psalmist continues with declaring the steadfast love and faithfulness of the Lord shown through “the work of His hands”.

In all we do, we should always acknowledge that the Lord is faithful to us FIRST, and without His steadfast love and faithfulness, we cannot be faithful to and love Him. The work of His hands are mighty and good for us. The Psalmist makes an important distinction that we must praise FIRST because our wonderful Father shows His steadfast love for us through His great works.

The Psalmist continues by acknowledging how the Lord’s work affects him. For the Lord’s work makes him glad and sings for joy! If you are not glad and singing for joy in all that the Lord does for you, then you are like the ignorant fool who cannot understand and is “doomed to destruction forever.” Why is the Psalmist so harsh?

Simply because of the general revelation of our God in His creation and in His works. As created beings, God reveals Himself in all that He has done. We see Him in creation. We see Him in the Son to redeem our relationship to Him. We see His grace and mercy in the forgiveness of our sins. There is no denying that our sovereign and almighty God has done, is doing, and will continue to do incredible works. Therefore, denying that makes us fools and evil doers who will know destruction forever, giving us no hope.

But there is hope! We are righteous through faith in Jesus Christ, obediently following in His glorious ways, and bearing fruit while being planted in Him. For the righteous flourish and are planted in the house of the Lord. They bear fruit, are full of sap and green - they declare the Lord is upright and their rock.

Spurgeon states, *“That the Lord is upright; how does the fruit-bearing of an aged Christian show that? Why, it shows that God has kept His promise. He has promised that He will never leave them nor forsake them. He has promised that when they are weak, they shall be strong. He has promised that if they seek him, they shall not lack any good thing.”* This is our fruit we bear, because of the Lord’s great works.

PRAYER PROMPTS

- What can you praise the Lord for today? Make a list and pray a prayer of praise.
- Confess and repent of the sins that get in the way of being joyful and singing praise to the Lord.
- Ask the Lord to increase your faith in order to bear fruit for Him.



Day 19
Friday - September 5
Genesis 1:27-28
Eddie Hickle

So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female. 28 God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth.”

The story of God’s creation of humanity is foundational to understanding His original design and our purpose within it. For you to experience true wholeness means living as humanity was intended. In the beginning, we see that God’s intention for humanity is to image Him, and maintain dominion over the earth as His people. Specifically in these 2 verse, God blesses Adam and Eve and gives them a clear command to, “*Be fruitful...*”. From this very first moment, every human life has lived under this same blessing and call.

You’ve likely heard this passage in the context of bearing children - and rightly so. God, as the ultimate Creator, gives us a vital and sacred role of continuing life through procreation. This is one way God grows His family, kingdom, and presence amongst us in the world. But God’s words in verse 28 are not redundant, “be fruitful” and “multiply” are distinct from one another. Fruitfulness is not childbearing, it is our call to live God-glorifying lives. God is addressing the type of life you are to live.

God’s blessing to “be fruitful” indicates our capacity to do so - only by His blessing. His command to “be fruitful” means we should not just consider it, but work to order and continually orient our lives towards that end.

We cannot do it in our power alone, which is why we desperately need Jesus. But a life of following Him means we have a vital and sacred role in the process in our submission to His power and work through us.

Author M. Robert Mulholland Jr., in *Invitation to a Journey*, puts it this way:

“Thus, spiritual formation [discipleship] is the experience of being shaped by God toward wholeness.”

Being fruitful is being formed by God - shaping you into Christlikeness, and experiencing wholeness as He designed from the very beginning.

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Thank the Lord for His work in creation and that He is faithful to us even when we are not.
- Ask Him to show you areas of your life that need to be reoriented to His purpose for you.
- Pray that you would experience true wholeness in your life, as you grow in Christlikeness.

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Day 20

Saturday - September 6

Hebrews 13:15

“A Sacrifice of Praise” - Alex Zuniga

Therefore, through him let us continually offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name.

The writer of Hebrews gives us a great picture of what our praise should look like—a sacrifice. The sacrifices of that age were typically the physical death of an animal as payment for the person’s sins. But when Jesus came, died, and rose again, those sacrifices were no longer needed—He paid the full price for mankind’s sins. So why, in this New Testament book, do we still see this kind of language? Though physical sacrifices are no longer required, we still sacrifice things in our lives—not for forgiveness of sin, but for our sanctification.

The writer tells us a very specific way to make a sacrifice today—through praise. When we open our mouths to sing, it’s “the fruit of lips that confess His name.” Our praise through song should be the fruit flowing from truth rooted in our hearts. It’s also important to note the passage says this can only be done “through Him”—Jesus! Even to praise Him, we need Him.

When we sing “*All my life You have been faithful...*” we sacrifice the idea that God isn’t being good to us in our current situation. When we sing “*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me,*” we sacrifice the idea that we deserve salvation by our own actions.

When we sing *“I trust in God, my Savior, the One who will never fail,”* we sacrifice the illusion of control and acknowledge His faithfulness.

Our worship should be fruit from our sanctification—a sacrifice of praise on the altar of God’s grace. If we sing but don’t believe the words, it’s time to pause and examine the root. Instead of singing louder or raising hands higher to “feel” the song, we must meet with God and ask Him to change us so the fruit of praise flows freely and authentically.

PRAYER PROMPTS

- When you worship in song - do you believe what you sing?
- Ask God to reveal any areas that you need to be rooted in truth and make a sacrifice of praise!
- Pray for our worship team - for true humility & authentic worship from the heart.



Day 21

Sunday - September 7

Psalm 1 & Revelation 22:1-5

“River of Life” - Bob Caraballo

1 How happy is the one who does not walk in the advice of the wicked or stand in the pathway with sinners or sit in the company of mockers! 2 Instead, his delight is in the LORD's instruction, and he meditates on it day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted beside flowing streams that bears its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. 4 The wicked are not like this; instead, they are like chaff that the wind blows away. 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand up in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. 6 For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to ruin.

1 Then he showed me the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 down the middle of the city's main street. The tree of life was on each side of the river, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree are for healing the nations, 3 and there will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 Night will be no more; people will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will give them light, and they will reign forever and ever.

Here we are at day twenty-one ... what an amazing three weeks of growth focused on prayer and power. As we close this time, what better place to end than in heaven?

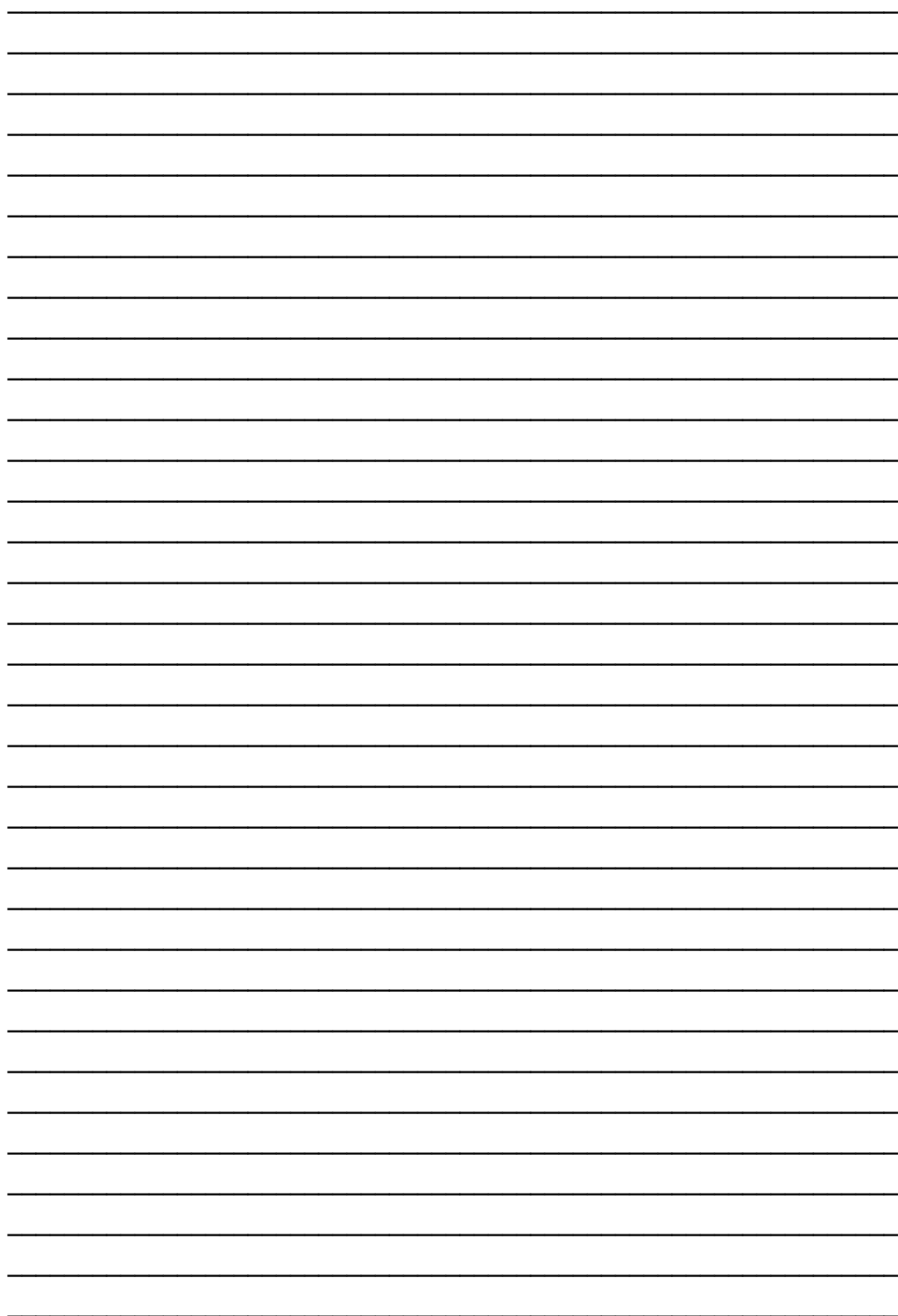
Psalm 1 reminds us that we are like trees planted near the water. Revelation 22 tells us that's what heaven will be like. John is shown a pure river of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

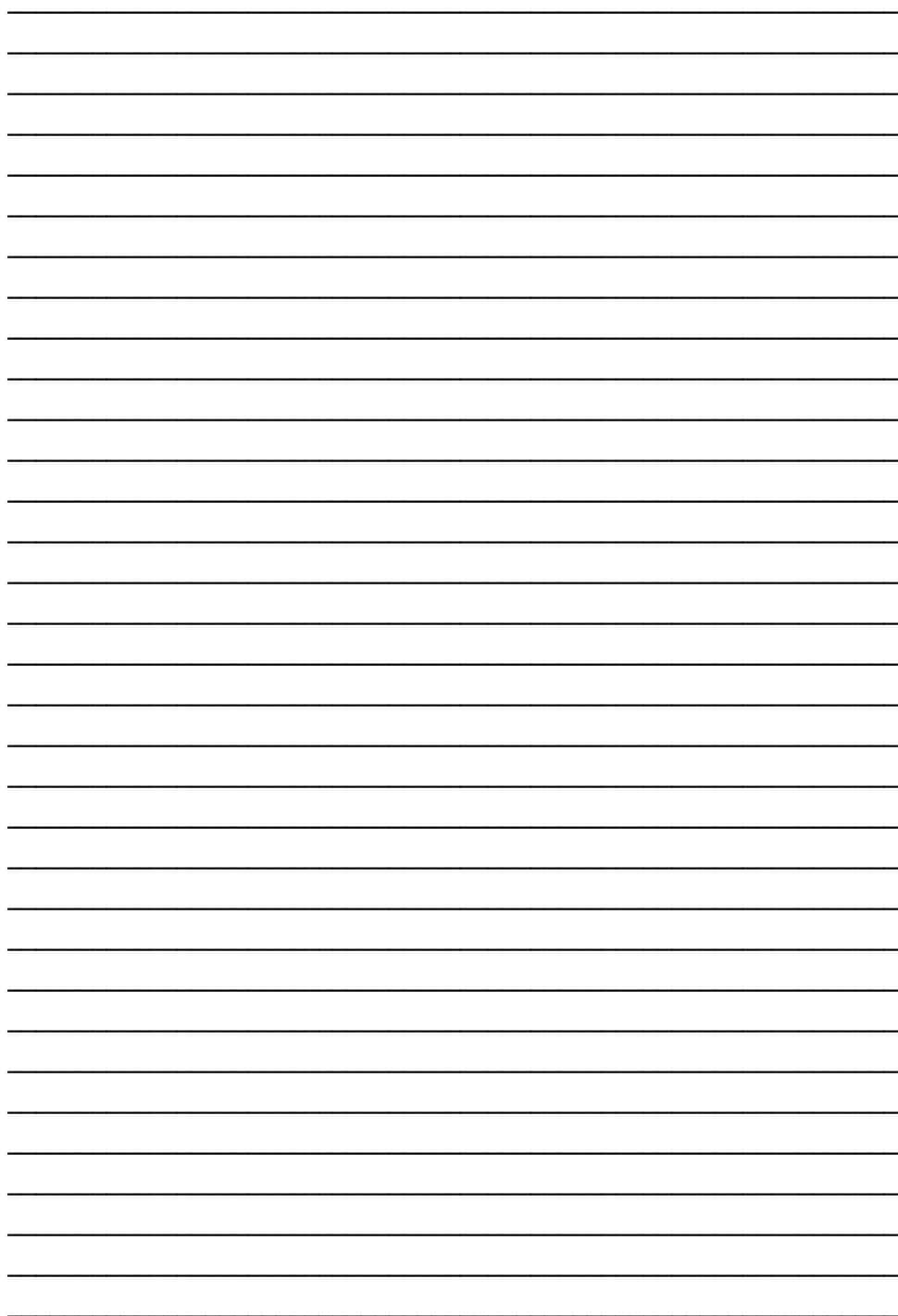
Are you thirsty? You have nothing to worry about. Jesus will fill you with a river of living water. You will be the one used by God to bring refreshing water.

As Jesus was sending His disciples to prepare the upper room for the Passover, He sent them to find a man with a water pitcher in his hands. My prayer is that we would be used by God to be that man for a world looking to find relief. May we be the one with the water pitcher. May we introduce a lost and dying world to the river of Living Water.

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Ask God to use us to be a fountain for those who thirst.
- Pray that God would strengthen our church during this season.
- Ask God to show you clear ways where you can be of service to the King.
- Pray for our Pastors.







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