

**Reconnect and Share Hope – Prayer Emphasis  
20 days of prayer**

**WEEK 1 – March 8-12, 2021**

**DAY 1- March 8, 2021**

**SHARING HOPE**

**I Peter 3:15**

<sup>15</sup> But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

Our theme for 2021 is “Share Hope”. Due to the impact Covid-19 has had on our city and our church, our focus over the next 20 days is to Reconnect and Share Hope with people.

It only makes sense we begin these 20 days of prayer by thinking about our hope in Jesus and the responsibility we have been given to reconnect with others and share this hope we have in the Lord Jesus.

Our verse for today says, I Peter 3:15

<sup>15</sup> But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

What a hope we have because of what Jesus has done in the past, is doing in the present, and will do in the future.

When we share our hope with others, we’re not just looking back we are also looking ahead.

We’re saying to our friends and family and others who don’t yet know Christ, “Here’s why I’m confident about the future! Here’s why I’m optimistic when the rest of the world is pessimistic!” When we share our hope, we’re looking ahead!

Our verse for today says we should always be ready to give an answer to everyone who asks for the reason for the hope we have.

Someone says to us, “Why are you so optimistic? Why do you have joy even when bad things are happening all around? Where does this hope come from?” The Bible says we must be ready to share the reason for the hope we have.

But before anyone asks us about the hope we have in Jesus, they must first see a reason to ask. Sometimes that is the problem. People don't see a reason to ask why things are different with your life.

Today we begin by asking God to prepare our hearts and lives for the opportunities God will give us to share our hope with others.

A professor was to speak on a military base. At the airport, a young man named Ralph met the professor to take him to the base. As they made their way to baggage claim to get the man's luggage something unusual happened. Along the way Ralph would stop and help people. He stopped to help a lady with her luggage. They stopped to hold a little girl up so she could see Santa Clause. Each time he would come back smiling.

The professor finally asked Ralph where he learned to be so helpful to others. He said he learned it during the war. His job was to clear landmines. Ralph said every time I took a step, I never knew how it was going to go, so I learned to live between the steps.

As believers we need to live between the steps when it comes to sharing our hope with others. Let's learn to live our lives looking for ways to share with those around us who do not have the hope we have in the Lord Jesus.

Our job is to share our hope!

But to do that we must Be Ready and Prepared to share hope.

**DAY 2 March 9, 2021**  
**SPREADING HIS NAME**  
**Psalm 96:3**

<sup>3</sup> Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples.

The Psalmist is excited because he has been invited to a special occasion.

You receive a nice-looking envelope in the mail. You open it up and there is a card that says, "Come join us: We're having a celebration". More than likely this invitation means someone you care about is being honored for some special reason and other people you care about are getting together to celebrate the occasion.

People get together all the time to celebrate events. People get together with a friend or family member who is having a birthday or an anniversary,

or who has earned a job promotion or some other honor. At these gatherings the host or hostess may even ask several of the guests to tell what the person means to them or has done for them.

We have been invited to join God in the greatest endeavor ever. The spreading of His Name.

Psalm 96:3

<sup>3</sup> Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples.

Our job is to declare or to speak about His name. The word is a picture of a scribe who had the job of writing and recording the works of an individual. You and I have the opportunity to tell our '*ONES*' all the good things the Lord has done for us.

Let me ask you a question. Are you excited about God? Are you excited about Jesus and the salvation he has brought to your life?

We talk about what we are excited about. We naturally share the things we find most appealing and beautiful. Are we as motivated to share the gospel because our eyes have seen the beauty of God Himself?

Psalm 96:3

<sup>3</sup> Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples.

God has given us, His people, the opportunity and responsibility of speaking about His works and blessings in our lives with others.

All peoples, the Psalmist says, should be the object of our concern. But all peoples must start somewhere and your *ONE* is a good place to start.

A Sunday school teacher was teaching her class of children about creation. "Now, children," she said, "Who can tell us what makes the flower spring from the seed?"

"God does," answered one little girl, "but fertilizer helps."

The heavens declare the glory of the Lord, the Bible says, but it sure does help when one of his redeemed ones steps up and speaks up about our wonderful God and His amazing grace.

Look for ways to share with your *ONE* about what God is doing in your life and your church. Begin to prepare the way to invite them to "Be My Guest"

Sunday on April 4<sup>th</sup>. Be My Guest cards will be available for you to use to invite your ONE to Easter Sunday.

This week share an amazing work God has done in your life with someone close to you. This will prepare you to be ready to share with others.

**DAY 3 March 10, 2021**  
**SHARING THE NEWS**

**Luke 2:10**

<sup>10</sup> "The angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."

The Gospel, which means 'good news', is found in so many places in the Bible.

When the angel came to announce the birth of the Lord Jesus because of what Jesus would do with His life, death, and resurrection...that message was 'good news'. Which means as believers we have some good news to share.

Luke 2:10

<sup>10</sup>"The angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."

"I bring you good tidings." And no tidings are better than the news that Christ has come to earth to be the Savior of men's souls which was the angel's message to the shepherds.

It is the best message ever given. It is not only good news, but also it is for everybody.

Fanny Crosby loved sharing the Gospel with anyone who would listen. In 1869 she penned the words to "Rescue the Perishing." When asked about the song, she explained, "It was written following a personal experience at the New York City Bowery Mission." She went on to explain that she would go one night a week to talk to those in attendance.

One night while speaking at the mission, she kept having the thought there was someone present who needed to be rescued right then, or he would be forever too late. She made a plea to each one present that night. At the end of the service, one of the young men came forward and said, "Did you mean me, Miss Crosby? I promised my mother to meet her in Heaven, but I know I am not living in a way that would make that possible."

She prayed with him and led him to Christ. As they finished, he said, "Now I am ready to meet my mother in Heaven, for I have found God."

Wherever we go this good news message of the Gospel is for all people. God just needs some folks like us to deliver the message. Let's ask God to help us be on the look-out for those who need some good news.

#### **DAY 4 - March 11, 2021**

#### **SHINE THE LIGHT**

#### **Matthew 5:16**

<sup>16</sup>"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven".

From this passage we learn some important things about being God's light in this world.

Matthew 5:16

<sup>16</sup>"**Let your light so shine** before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven".

The verse says, "let your light shine". Light is supposed to shine, that is what light is and what it does. Here light refers to the character and the conduct of our lives. Can the people you want to reach see your light? Can people identify you as a follower of the Lord Jesus by your character and conduct?

That is why we are here, to shine. Light shines. Where is this light made to shine?

Matthew 5:16

<sup>16</sup>"Let your light so shine **before men**, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven".

The verse locates the place when it says before men. Our world is a dark place and needs light. God commands us to shine. We are the only light this world has. If we do not shine, only darkness will prevail.

Yes, these days we are living in are dark in many ways. As Christians we are to be unhindered light in a generation of people that prefers darkness.

This is the place we are to shine. This means our light is to shine in public. We are to shine everywhere, not just in church on Sundays, but we are to shine at work, at school, on the job, and in the community.

Why? Why does God want us to shine our light?

Matthew 5:16

<sup>16</sup> "Let your light so shine before men, **that they may see** your good works, **and glorify your Father** who is in heaven".

The main purpose for light is so you can see. Shining a light into a dark room or turning on the switch as you enter a dark room enables you to see where you are going and what is ahead.

As believers we are to live in such a way, with God's help, that people will be able to see Christ through our good works.

It may be difficult and challenging but we must keep the light shining for a world that needs to see the glorious light of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Shine the light.

## **DAY 5 - March 12, 2021**

### **SHARING HOPE**

#### **I Thessalonians 2:4**

<sup>4</sup> But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.

Before you take a trip away from home, you often will take care of things at home before leaving. If you are away for the weekend, you might ask family or neighbors to check your mail, take care of the animals, or set out the garbage. If you are away for several weeks, you might even line up someone to mow your lawn.

Paul is saying to us in our scripture for the day that we have been given something very important. Something has been entrusted to us from the Lord.

What has been entrusted to us is the Gospel, the good news of what Jesus has done for us and for all people. According to this verse we are His messengers and we have been given the greatest message of all, the message of the Gospel.

What are we to do with the message? We are to speak. We are to share this message with others. We are to share the story of God's salvation and how we have experienced it and how others can as well. We must not be timid when it comes to the Gospel.

Be My Guest cards will be available this Sunday for you to pick up and begin praying over as we look forward to Be My Guest EASTER Sunday.

Pray today that God will give you boldness to prepare your heart to share with others this gift of salvation which you possess.

## **WEEK 2 – March 15-19, 2021**

### **DAY 6 - March 15, 2021**

#### **KEEP ON GOING**

#### **Hebrews 12:2**

<sup>2</sup>Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Our passage for today helps us keep walking for the Lord. Jesus continued fulfilling his mission and so should we as His believers.

I love Walter Carr's story. The day before Walter Carr was scheduled to begin a new job working for a moving company, he found himself facing a dilemma: His car broke down and he had no way of getting to work.

Or, rather, no *easy* way of getting to work.

He realized his only option was to walk the 20-mile distance from his home to the job site, the home of a family he was to help move. After sleeping a few hours, Walter left at midnight, expecting the walk to take about eight hours. At the half-way point he stopped to rest. When police officers stopped him for a routine check, Walter told his story. Intrigued by Walter's determination to get to work on time, the officers gave him a ride to the jobsite after taking him to breakfast. The client, as well as his co-workers, were impressed with his determination. And so was his boss, the moving company's CEO. So impressed, in fact, he drove from his home in Chattanooga to have lunch with Walter Carr.

While Walter walked the half-hour distance to his lunch meeting, his boss waited for him — along with the clients, the Pelham police, and his co-workers. When he arrived, his boss gave Walter the keys to a Ford Escape SUV. The clients said their family will be inspired by him whenever they have tough times. "He's like the poster boy for no excuses".

Long before Walter Carr came along with his determination there was another who was determined not just to make it to a job but to carry out the greatest assignment of all, bringing salvation to the world. Our Lord has commissioned us as His believers to carry out our assignment as well.

Life can put a wet towel on our fiery passion which once burned brightly. But we find hope to endure when we look at the cross. As we think on the person and work of Jesus, we place our hope in the One who endured hostility to the point of death on the cross. He did this so we would not give up.

As the great crowd of witnesses spurs you on, keep running the race set before you with endurance, with your eyes ever fixed on the Savior.

While it may take years or decades to see that friend, family member or your *One* come to Christ, "be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord's work, because you know that your labor is not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Pray the Lord would give you endurance as you share the gospel with your *One*.

**DAY 7 - March 16, 2021**  
**GOD GIVES THE GROWTH**  
**I CORINTHIANS 3:5-6**

<sup>5</sup> Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?

<sup>6</sup> I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.

If you like fast-action results, you should not take up farming. It is the slow and steady act of consistent day-in and day-out nurturing and cultivating the plants. Likewise, sharing the gospel where we live, work and play can be slow work.



We build relationships and share the love of Christ in word and deed. We pray our friends and family who do not know Christ will turn away from their sins and turn toward Him in humble submission. In this sometimes-slow process, the Lord uses other men and women to call people to Himself.

Each person has a role they play in their influence of drawing people into the kingdom. While God uses our labor and the labors of others, true spiritual growth comes from God Himself.

As you share the gospel with your *One*, resist the urge to become frustrated when people become Christians or grow spiritually as a result of another's influence. You may plant and another may water, but ultimately God causes them to grow.

Recall the people who played a role in your own story of salvation. Communicate—a thank you note, a phone call, a text message, etc.—your gratitude for their willingness to be used by the Lord to call you to Himself.

**Day 8 - March 17, 2021**  
**THE LORD OPENS HEARTS**

**Acts 16:14**

<sup>14</sup> Now a certain woman named Lydia heard *us*. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.

Opportunities to share the gospel can happen at unexpected times, and we have to be open to recognize them when they come.

Paul and his companions went to sit by a river to pray. When they found the space occupied, they engaged the women who were there. It is here we witness God open the heart of Lydia in response to Paul's proclamation of the gospel.

We never know the degree to which God is working in a person's heart, but we can depend on God to open the hearts of those we share the gospel with.

God and His Word are sufficient to do the heavy lifting in our evangelism. Remain faithful to share His Word. You never know who may be listening and whose heart will be opened.

Pray you would be ready to share the gospel in the unexpected moments of life this week.

**Day 9 - March 18, 2021**

**Whatever It Takes**

**I Corinthians 9:19-23**

<sup>19</sup> For though I am free from all *men*, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;

<sup>20</sup> and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those *who are* under the law, as under the law, that I might win those *who are* under the law;

<sup>21</sup> to those *who are* without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those *who are* without law;

<sup>22</sup> to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some.

<sup>23</sup> Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with *you*.

Paul was willing to do whatever it took to win people to the Lord. He did whatever he had to do to remove barriers that may have prevented people from believing and trusting in Christ by wholly giving of himself to the needs and service of others.

He put his all into sharing the hope he had in Jesus.

I love the story of Clyde Scott. An Olympian and a two-sport star for the Razorbacks, Clyde was named the state's athlete of the century by readers of the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette.

Scott was a three-time Southeastern Conference player and an All-American in football in 1948. He also lettered in track. He played for the University of Arkansas and led the Southeastern Conference in football scoring. He played defensive back but also was a great running back. He was not that good of an open field runner but when his team got down to the 10-yard line they always put Clyde in the game. No one could keep him out of the end zone.

Someone asked Clyde one time why he was so unstoppable inside the 10-yard line. He responded, "when I get that close to the goal line, I just throw my heart into the end zone and drive for my heart." What a statement. I drive for my heart.

I know it is not easy sharing with others about Jesus. This phrase has been a real help to me. Let's throw our hearts into it and then let's drive for our hearts.

Ask God as you pray today to not just have your *One* on your mind but in your heart. Like Paul and Clyde Scott let's do whatever it takes to win our *Ones* to the Lord.

## **Day 10 - March 19, 2021**

### **One is Precious**

#### **Luke 15:4-7**

<sup>4</sup> "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?"

<sup>5</sup> And when he has found *it*, he lays *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing.

<sup>6</sup> And when he comes home, he calls together *his* friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!'

<sup>7</sup> I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

Bigger is better, and more is greater. That's what we're led to believe. We celebrate large numbers and record-breaking moments (as we should). Sometimes it's the small and little things we do that mount up over time.

Albert Lexi is an example of little becoming big. Albert would go every week to the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. For 32 years he went and what did he do when he visited the hospital? He would shine the shoes of the staff and visitors and share with them the hope he had found in the Lord. He never charged for a shoeshine and all tips received were given to the hospital to be used for the children.

Small numbers became big over time for Albert. When Albert retired in 2013, he had given more than \$200,000 in tips to the hospital for the children. But more than that he had shared hope with thousands who had been the recipients of his kindness.

We all love to hear the stories of hundreds and thousands who come to know the Lord. We want to see more and more people experience the joy which comes from a relationship with Jesus.

But that all starts with ONE person who looks for ways to reach out to ONE and influence them in a positive way for the Lord. The one, your ONE, is precious in His sight. God rejoices over the one sinner who repents.

Pray today for the thousands that need to come to Jesus but especially make sure you call the name of ONE, Your ONE.

## **WEEK 3 – March 22-26, 2021**

**Day 11 - March 22, 2021**

**The Power Of A Gift**

**Ephesians 1:7**

<sup>7</sup> In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.

We all have received a gift before and therefore understand the joy that comes when someone thinks of us enough to give.

James Harrison is a giver and not a taker. He lives in Australia and is called the man with the Golden arm.

He has a strong dislike for needles. But James discovered an opportunity which caused him to overcome his dislike and fear of needles. He gives blood every few weeks for babies that are dying. You see, it was discovered on a routine doctor visit that his blood contains certain antibodies capable of curing a rare disease in babies whose blood type is not compatible with that of their mothers. For the last 60 years he has given blood every few weeks and more than 2.4 million babies lives have been spared.

You may not have some unique blood type that you could give and save thousands of lives, but you do know a God who gave His son so that those who believe in Him might live and not die.

Someone just needs to be the one to share that news.

Just as there was power in the gift that James Harrison gave through his blood. There is even greater power in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through His blood comes the gift of forgiveness to those who will believe.

Pray for your *ONE* to believe in the greatest gift of all.

There is power in this gift.

**Day 12 – March 23, 2021**

**Sent By Him**

**John 17:18**

<sup>18</sup> As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

Albert Schweitzer was 38 years old when he received his medical degree. He and his wife moved to an African country to practice medicine and provide ministry among the people.

He was able to establish a hospital to care for the poor. He could have had a rather easy life, but he spent his time serving the poor. He started his career because he realized he had made a mess of his life and God had given him a second chance. He wanted others to understand the love and compassion Christ would show to them.

Someone asked him why he decided to leave his homeland and go so far away for so little pay. His answer is classic. He responded, "because Jesus sent me."

That is the basis for doing everything we do. Jesus sent me. Where we work. How we spend our time. Even what we do in the leisure moments of our lives. Let's never forget we have been sent by Jesus.

Jesus said in our scripture reading for today, I have sent them into the world. Praying for your *ONE*, looking for ways to connect with your *ONE*, and being hopeful to have an opportunity to share with your *ONE* are all because we have been sent by Jesus.

Sent by Jesus to our *ONE*.

### **Day 13 – March 24, 2021**

#### **God Uses People**

#### **Psalm 77:19-20**

<sup>19</sup> Your way *was* in the sea, Your path in the great waters, And Your footsteps were not known.

<sup>20</sup> You led Your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Sometimes God will use people in our lives to change the course of our lives. Some of these people might seem like the last people in the world God would use.

In the film based on a true story, *Schindler's List*, German businessman Oskar Schindler decided to use Jews in his machine factory during World War II. Jews were cheap labor for Schindler and would gain him a better profit.

However, since these Jews were used for labor, they would not be sent off to the concentration camps to die. Over the course of the film, Schindler

develops a relationship with these Jews and uses his wealth and influence to save their lives. A shrewd, wealthy, and powerful German businessman, who was also a member of the Nazi party, saved the lives of hundreds of Jews.

The least likely person was used to change the course of history for thousands of people who otherwise would have lost their lives.

God wants to use you and me to change the course of others' lives forever. God doesn't have to use us; He chooses to use us.

God could have led the Israelites across the Red Sea and into the Promised Land without the assistance of any human, but He chose not to rescue them that way.

While God's people were saved through the miraculous parting of The Red Sea, He used Moses and Aaron to do it. This is the pattern we see throughout scripture. God's plan of redemption for the world is accomplished through His people sharing the Gospel.

In Acts, He arranged it so a man in a chariot was riding along when Phillip arrived in the desert. God did not have to use Phillip, but he chose to use him. He does not have to use us, but He chooses to use us for His name's sake. God leads His people through His people.

Never underestimate the role you can and will play in the lives of those you are praying for and working with to come to Jesus.

If God is going to do a work in your *ONE's* life, He will likely use you and other believers to do it.

As you go about your day, look for opportunities the Lord is giving you to be His hands, feet, and mouthpiece to those you encounter.

## **Day 14 – March 25, 20221**

### **Keep On Praying**

#### **Luke 18:1**

<sup>1</sup>Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,

There is never a time to quit or give up on prayer. Keep on praying. Don't lose heart.

In professional football games the coach may take a lot of things on the field when the game begins. He may have a clip board with all the plays they have worked on and think will work at certain times in the game.

But there is one thing the head coach carries onto the field that you don't see. He keeps it in his pocket. From time to time, you will see a coach reach in his pocket and pull out a flag and throw it onto the field.

When he does that it means he's contesting something the referee has called on the field and the flag shows he doesn't agree. The coach feels the referee didn't see the play the way he saw the play.

When he throws the flag out onto the field, the play of the game is going to stop. The referee is then going to go and look more intently at the play to determine whether the right call was made or not.

On many occasions I have seen them reverse a call because of the coach's flag.

When Christians pray right, God, in heaven, stops to take a second look. On many occasions, things have reversed in a person's life all because a Christian threw up a prayer flag. God welcomes the flag of prayer.

If you have labored for hours and weeks maybe even years for your *ONE*, keep on praying.

It's easy to question...Why hasn't God answered my prayers to save my best friend, brother or co-worker? Why is my *ONE* still not walking with the Lord?

Sometimes we assume the work of reaching my *ONE* is found in preparing my gospel message. But perhaps the greater work happens on our knees when no one is watching.

God hears our petitions to save those we love. He longs for them to be saved, too. He is not slow, and He desires all to repent and to come to a saving knowledge of Him (2 Peter 3:9).

Keep on praying, never give up and do not grow weary of the good work you are doing to reach your *ONE*. Your Father hears you. Go ahead and throw down that prayer flag.

## **Day 15 – March 26, 2021**

### **Jesus Cares**

#### **Jonah 4:10-11**

<sup>10</sup> But the LORD said, "You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night.

<sup>11</sup> And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one

hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left and much livestock?"

The book of Jonah is one of the most fascinating books in the Bible. It is filled with drama and scene changes all through the book.

The story of Jonah is a story of weeping, for Jonah was told to go to Nineveh and to cry... to cry out... to proclaim a message that reflected the weeping heart of God. It is the story of the heart of God weeping for a lost city and for a confused and condemned people.

We, too, are living in times that should make us cry.

We are serving a Savior who wept over the city of Jerusalem and by the tomb of Lazarus. He weeps today over the world, our nation, and this state.

There were things in Jonah's day that should have made him cry.

We live among people who are hurting and confused. And sadly, sometimes like Jonah there is very little compassion or concern for people outside our circle.

Some years ago, this story appeared on the television news, and in the New York Times. There was the story of a man on the New York subway -- 37 years old, 5 foot 6, 170 pounds. He had on jeans, a gold polo shirt, and black boots. He was sitting there on the subway as people got on and got off, coming and going, movement all around him.

But he was dead. He had sat down and died, and nobody even noticed him.

Like Jonah we too can become careless and cold to others around us. Like Jonah we can become more interested in some plant than we are people.

Here we are, Christians, living in a world full of dead people we come and go around in circles, and sometimes we lose our burden.

We forget we are surrounded by people who are dead to Christ and dead to hope. We hold in our hands, and have in our hearts, the power to change a person's life forever.

When 67-year-old carpenter Russell Herman died in 1994, his will included a staggering set of bequests. Included in his plan for distribution was more than two billion dollars for the City of East St. Louis, another billion and a half for the State of Illinois, two and a half billion for the national forest



system, and to top off the list, Herman left six trillion dollars to the government to help pay off the national debt.

That sounds amazingly generous, but there was a small problem—Herman's only asset when he died was a 1983 Oldsmobile.

He made grand pronouncements, but his promises were meaningless because there was nothing to back them up.

God has made a grand promise of salvation to all who will accept it and He did back it up with the life of His only son Jesus.

Why did he do that? Because He cares deeply.

Let's be faithful to care about people and to share with them how Deeply God Cares.

## **WEEK 4 – March 29- April 2, 2021**

### **Day 16 – March 29, 2021**

#### **Always Faithful**

#### **Matthew 25:21**

<sup>21</sup> His lord said to him, 'Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

The Marines are known for many things, courage, bravery, and fearlessness, but perhaps they are best known for their motto "Semper Fidelis".

That Latin phrase means always faithful. But for marines it is more than just a phrase or slogan, it is a way of life. It is a commitment to their country and to each other.

Suppose there is a husband, and he gives his wife a big anniversary present and celebration every year. The husband comes home from work, takes his wife out to dinner, gives her a great gift, and makes a big to-do about that special day. But that's it. She hardly gets a nod from him for the rest of the year. The husband doesn't do anything else special for the rest of the year, but she can count on next anniversary time, he's going to be there with a great present and a nice dinner. And he's going to let her know how much he loves her and then they will do the same again the next year and the next, etc.

I believe any woman would gladly trade in an annual anniversary day for a consistent 364 days full of communication and compassion, even if it only included a McDonald's dinner.

Some of us get happy because we do one big thing for God a year. We say, "Boy, on November 26, I did a biggie for God. I know heaven was applauding because I did a whopper for God!"

We've got those two or three things a year we do for God. At the judgment seat, God is not going to want to know only about November 26. He's going to want to know about what you did every day over the course of your life.

He's going to ask you, "Did you live a life of faithfulness to Me?"

God is not concerned about the occasional biggies you do. He's concerned about the consistent obedience that you give. He wants to know whether or not we can be faithful. The definition of faithfulness is consistently giving God your best in what He calls you to do.

What a challenge to us as believers who serve on the greatest team ever.

This phrase "Semper Fidelis" is a reminder of commitment and responsibility.

Commitment and responsibility is the glue that holds together military units, teams, churches, businesses and families. A group of people who are always faithful will go far and accomplish much.

We now enter the final week of our 20 days of prayer. I know you have been praying for your ONE and seeking to connect with your ONE. Just a few more days until Be My Guest Sunday which is April 4, 2021.

Don't lose heart when it comes to being faithful in your commitment to your ONE.

Semper Fidelis!

## **Day 17 – March 30, 2021**

### **Beautiful Feet**

#### **Romans 10:14-15**

<sup>14</sup> How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

<sup>15</sup> And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"

Our scripture passage for today has to do with feet. There are all sorts of feet. There are large feet, small feet, long feet, short feet, lean feet, and pudgy feet.

Some people have strange looking feet. Others have beautiful feet. Did you know that there are foot models? They get paid to have their feet photographed!

Take a look at your feet. On a scale of one to ten, one being ugly and ten being beautiful, how would you rate your feet? While God has made many beautiful things, I don't imagine any of us would rate our feet as a ten!

However, it is possible for all of us to have beautiful feet, at least in God's eyes. God thinks some feet are very beautiful! I'm not suggesting a pedicure. God is interested in our feet. God is not so much concerned about how your feet look, but where they go and what they do.

Doctors tell us that your feet are mirrors of your health. Signs of diabetes, arthritis, circulatory problems, often appear first in your feet.

Your feet play an important role in your spiritual well-being. Some feet lead to trouble, strife, and heartache.

### **Isaiah 59:7-8**

<sup>7</sup>Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood; Their thoughts *are* thoughts of iniquity; Wasting and destruction *are* in their paths.

<sup>8</sup> The way of peace they have not known, and *there is* no justice in their ways; They have made themselves crooked paths; Whoever takes that way shall not know peace.

Other's feet are yielded to God and His work.

Our words are critical. While we can display aspects of the gospel through our actions, sinners cannot come to faith in Christ without hearing the gospel message.

According to Romans 10:14-15: we are sent to share this good news of the gospel. We have no control over how our *ONE* will respond to the Gospel,

but we do have control over our going and speaking. God is the one who will initiate their listening and accepting. The proclaimer's feet are not beautiful because a person came to Christ.

Their feet are beautiful because they were faithful to proclaim the message.

As you go throughout your day, may you be a carrier of *the* best news to your *ONE* and beyond.

## **Day 18 – March 31, 2021**

### **Mission Success**

#### **Matthew 16:18**

<sup>18</sup> And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

The church is, without question, the most important institution in the history of the world. Did you know the church is the largest institution that has ever existed upon the face of this planet? It is estimated there is close to 1.9 billion people who profess faith in Jesus Christ.

I know there are some who say the church is on the way out, and in one sense they are right. Jesus has called the church out; He is sending the church out; and one day He will take the church out.

But until Jesus takes His church out, He is still sending His church out into this world with a transforming message.

God has given us a wonderful promise about His church in this passage. The mission of the church is great, but He promises this mission will not fail! No matter the enemies who come against us as we seek to share the gospel with our *ONE*, the mission will not fail.

Jesus said two things about the church that guarantees her future. First, He said, "I will build My church." (v.18) This is the first mention of the church in the New Testament. It is the only prediction Jesus made about the establishment of the church. When Jesus said, "I will build My church" He gave the strongest possible guarantee of the church's ultimate success.

As we serve the Lord Jesus in spreading His word, we are sharing in a message that cannot fail. But notice what else Jesus said, ". . .and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." (v.18)

Now think about that. Jesus said even hell won't be able to stop His building program. If you think about it you realize gates are not for offense; they are for defense.

Did you know it is not the church's job to stop hell? It is hell's job to stop the church. But the one thing hell can't stop is the church. Now hell can stop anything and everything else, but it cannot stop the church because Jesus is building the church.

Now the word Hades literally means "the abode of the dead." It is the job of the church, day in and day out, to storm the gates of hell.

How do we do that? One of the ways is by going after those the Devil has chained in the darkness of sin. The gates of darkness cannot prevail against the light of God. The gates of despair cannot prevail against the love of God.

The message of the gospel will continue to go forth regardless of the difficulties. Be encouraged that you are on a mission with God's people that cannot fail. His power working in and through us will keep us in the fight until the day he makes all things new.

Pray for strength to keep on keeping on for the Lord in sharing the good news of the Gospel with our city.

## **Day 19 – April 1, 2021**

### **The Time Is Now**

#### **Acts 8:26-31**

<sup>26</sup>Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert. So, he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot."

So, Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him.

Timing is everything. I know all of us have heard this phrase in the sports world: 'Quarterbacks and wide receivers work on their timing. Runners monitor their pace.' Athletes are always working on their timing.

But is timing truly everything? Think about it. A team can have great timing on a certain play, but if the players are not in the right location, the play won't work. A team can possess all the talent in the world, but if the player is not in the right position at the right time then the play will not be successful.

As Christians we have been placed on the greatest team of all, we are on God's team. How did we get on God's team? It happened the moment we were saved. At that moment we became members of the greatest team in the land.

God has gifted you as one of His team players with the gifts your team needs. There are many things a team player is called on to do for the team. When it comes to God's team, one of the biggest things God asks us to do is join him in carrying out the Great Commission.

What is this Great Commission? It is God's team reaching the lost with the good news of the gospel and then growing those new team members into functioning team members for the Lord.

As a team, fellow Christ-followers are called on to serve one another and share the hope we have in Jesus. We all have a role in sharing hope. We are just a few days away from Be My Guest Sunday. I hope you have prayed about the guest you would like to see come with you on Easter Sunday morning.

The time is now. Will you take your place on the team and invite your *ONE* to join us Easter Sunday for Be My Guest Sunday?

The timing is now. The team is counting on you.

## **Day 20 – April 2, 2021**

### **Our Time**

#### **Esther 4:14**

<sup>14</sup> For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this?"

Moses began his ministry when he was eighty. Esther started when she was a teenage girl. Esther faced the biggest choice in her life. When Mordecai sent word to her about the great danger their people were facing, she could

have simply tried to save herself. She could have kept quiet, just hoped for the best, or turned the other way.

But she and Mordecai both knew God had given her great purpose in her position. She was wise, she made a plan, she didn't stay stuck in fear or worry, she prayed and fasted, and asked for their people to do the same. She was willing to act, to follow God's lead, to save the lives of her people, even if it meant she might lose hers.

Though our current situations may look different than what Esther faced, we too have been given an opportunity to make a difference in one's life. God has given us a great purpose and we have also been given position and influence as did Esther.

Many times, the places where we find ourselves are not really "all about us." It's about Him. It's about His bigger plan.

This Sunday is Be My Guest Sunday. This is our time to act on behalf of our *ONE's*. Our time to Pray! Our time to serve! Our time to call! Our time to invite!

Together God's people are praying together for a great ingathering of people this Sunday for Be My Guest Sunday.

The time is here. This is Our Time.