

# 40 DAYS OF *prayer*

## WEEK 5

### REAWAKENING TO THE MISSION OF CHRIST

This week, we will look at some of the things Jesus has called us to do as we live on mission with Him in this world. He defines and assigns the mission we are to carry out. May we carry it out in obedience and dependence!

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## BEING SALT AND LIGHT

MATTHEW 5:13-16

Jesus uses two metaphors to describe our mission. He tells us that we are “the salt of the earth” (v. 13) and “the light of the world” (v. 14). Both indicate that our Jesus-assigned mission involves being influential to those around us who do not know Him.

Salt adds flavor and acts as an agent of purification and preservation. Jesus is calling us to a distinct lifestyle marked by His character that has a positive moral and ethical influence on the people around us. Our lives should point people to the Christ who alone enables us to live in a way that avoids the moral and ethical deterioration of the world. If we’re just like the world, then we’ll never be able to reach those in the world.

Light pushes back the darkness, enabling people to see more clearly. Jesus reminds us that light can’t be hidden but must be displayed to benefit those who are still in spiritual darkness. Our witness—both in words and in lifestyle—must be displayed in a way that helps others see Jesus. 1 John 1:5 reminds us that “God is light.” His character is perfect in holiness. As we go deeper in our relationship with Jesus, His Spirit conforms our character more and more to be like His. People are attracted to Jesus by what they see in us.



### PRAYER POINTS:

- 1.** Ask the Holy Spirit to identify any areas of your life that are a hindrance to pointing people to Jesus. Repent of what the Spirit reveals.
- 2.** While we aren’t to be like the world, we are to be in the world. If you’ve withdrawn from the people who need to be reached, ask the Lord to give you the courage to let your light shine.
- 3.** Make a list of the people in your neighborhood, workplace, or school who do not seem to have a relationship with Jesus. Pray for these people and your witness to them.

## BEING FISHERS OF PEOPLE

LUKE 5:1-11

We read that the Lord Jesus calls simple and ordinary people to follow Him. As the King of the universe, He is neither in “need” of workmen nor is He a taskmaster. He can make a donkey do His bidding, as occurred in the Old Testament.

The “call” of God, from creation and since sin entered humanity, has been for us to belong to Him, to know Him, and to be *with* Him. All else comes out of this primary “calling.”

As Peter and his friends followed the Master, Jesus taught them the Word of God and of His Kingdom. They also “caught” what it meant to be in a loving, trusting relationship with the Father, observing Jesus’ life and labor of love as they lived in close communion with Him.

This invitation by the Lord, when accepted wholly, gradually transformed His followers to become just like Him—others-oriented, rather than living self-focused—for the honor of the Father. God is always about gathering His people. The call has always been about God *with* us and *through* us for the hurting world. The Holy Spirit continues to transform and sanctify us into the likeness of Jesus even as He works *through* us, calling others to Himself.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. How is your relationship with your Heavenly Father? How is your hunger and thirst for Him and His Word? Is He your daily satisfaction? If not, why? What practices need to shift or change for you to be in intimate communion with Him?
2. Where does your life need to be aligned so that you can co-labor with the Lord to be a fisher of men?
3. Do you have friends who are non-Christians? If not, how can you be proactive in entering into trustworthy, meaningful friendships with those who do not know the heart of God in Christ for them?

» by Annie George

## CARING FOR HURTING PEOPLE

## MATTHEW 25:31-46

Our Father has entrusted us, His people, to care like Christ—especially for those who are hurting. At its essence, such caring is an act of worship to a loving Savior who embodies the heart of our loving Father. We too embody His heart to care like Christ—He who is love is in us and seeks to love through us (John 17:21–26). Caring like Christ is not just a good idea, it is a heart directive for those who are His.

Matthew 25:31–46 describes the return of Christ and the final judgment. King Jesus, the enthroned Lamb of God (John 1:29; Rev. 5:6, 6:16, 12:11), separates those who bear His heart likeness, the sheep on His right, from those who do not, the goats on the left. The difference between the two groups is their hearts and how they cared.

Christ's people care like He cares. Moving in His incarnational presence, we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, visit the sick, come to those in prison, and minister in all sorts of other ways to the hurting. As He has loved us, we love them; as we love them, we love Him.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Ask the Lord to forgive you for missing opportunities to minister His love and kindness to those who are hurting.
2. Pray that the Holy Spirit will give you eyes to see hurting people as He does and to refresh your heart to care like Him.
3. Ask God to empower you to glorify Him and to minister to hurting people.

» by Cathy Sigmund

## **PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO THE WHOLE WORLD** **MATTHEW 24:14**

When Jesus was asked by His disciples what the sign of His coming would be, He said that “this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” They probably hoped that Jesus would say, “today is the end of the age,” but He did not. Instead, He invited them to participate in spreading the good news of His Kingdom to all the world.

Forty years ago, I thought that my life was ending because I was frightened all the time and living in the darkness, but I heard the gospel and accepted Jesus’ salvation for my life through the preaching of one of His servants. Thirty years ago, I thought my life was ending again because I was on my death bed with a brain tumor, but the Lord healed me, allowed me to live, and invited me on a journey with Him to spread the gospel to the world.

We are to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to our dying world. We are to be His witnesses to all people around us who have never had a chance to hear God’s Word and about the glorious coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, as we participate in this concentrated season of prayer, we must remain faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ and diligently study God’s Word and preach His living Word as a testimony to all nations until the day of His coming.



### **PRAYER POINTS:**

- 1.** Pray that God will allow His Word to be preached through you.
- 2.** Ask the Holy Spirit to help you live as a testimony to His goodness.
- 3.** Pray that the Lord will strengthen the Alliance family to pray faithfully and to bring the gospel of the Kingdom to all nations.

» by Hendy Siu

## YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES

ACTS 1:8

Jesus' disciples were called to be His witnesses in the work of restoring and introducing His new Kingdom to all peoples. In Luke's Gospel (24:45–48), Jesus tells His disciples what they are to be witnesses to: His suffering and His Resurrection alongside the message of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As His disciples, we too are called to be His witnesses. This is accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit.

But what does this mean? The work of the Spirit in the apostles throughout Acts is understood as the extension of work begun by Jesus and now carried on by His Spirit in us. The Spirit provides the power that enables us to be faithful witnesses of Christ, demonstrating the universality and unconditionality of the gospel for all peoples. The regenerating power of the Spirit is to be seen in our changed, Christ-like lives. Through our witness, the Spirit moves others to believe.

The focus of our message is not the Spirit and His gifts, but rather Jesus—His suffering, His Resurrection, and His sacrificial love for all peoples. The Spirit's actual evidence is His power in us to point people to Christ. Jesus Himself is the demonstration God intends in the world, and we are the vehicles He has chosen to communicate the reality of Jesus.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Keep your focus on Jesus on a moment-by-moment basis each day (Hebrews 12:1-2), and do not be distracted by temporary lures of our culture.
2. Ask the Lord to help you exhibit the reality of Jesus through a changed life to our generation, which has lost its way.
3. Actively look for ways to communicate Jesus with your friends, coworkers, and neighbors.

» by Brenna Vickers

## PREPARED TO GIVE AN ANSWER

1 PETER 3:15

Being prepared to give an answer must begin with becoming the very occasion for the question. In other words, we start by becoming a riddle that the world simply can't ignore any longer.

That's why in the Sermon on the Mount, we are called to be a city on a hill unable to hide. And that's why in the Great Commission, we are told to make disciples as we go. Because in the mission of God, we don't push or argue with people into following us; instead, we pull them. Or rather, we attract them. In effect, we live a life that draws people's attention and makes them wonder about our distinctive joy, love, peace, freedom, and hope.

The most compelling Christian witness is our very lives being led by the Spirit. The gospel promises that such a life erupts as I learn to die to my natural inclination to take all matters into my own hands by no longer trusting myself instead of God. Again, rather than taking charge by using every strategy and human strength at my disposal, I choose moment by moment to deny myself. Only then will I be able to pay attention to and follow the powerful presence of Christ within me. And through His personal care and wisdom, I will receive the very freedom, grace, and peace everyone seems to be looking for anxiously in all the wrong places.

In this messy and hurting world, such a life won't go unnoticed, awakening deeply personal and life-altering questions. And surely, only the very pouring of that miraculous life will satisfy the questioner's quest. I would call that discipleship.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Ask the Lord to help you trust in Him more today and to fill you with His peace.
2. Pray that He will grant you the opportunity to be in life-giving conversations with others.
3. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in being a showcase of His goodness and mercy.

## GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES

MATTHEW 28:18-20

In the familiar “Great Commission” text today, we have one primary temptation that threatens to weaken these verses and miss their point entirely. We may be led to believe that this commission is only for professional missionaries, a select few who are good at this sort of thing or simply crazy enough to move to another culture to spread the good news.

I, in no way, want to minimize the important call to leave one’s homeland and take the gospel to the least-reached places on earth. In fact, it’s this distinctive that I love about our Alliance family.

However, Jesus’ words in this passage are not to a few disciples on the top of a mountain or to those who have completed extensive cross-cultural training. His commission is for all of us.

It’s not easy to make disciples. It is uncomfortable at times, and feels downright impossible at others, to live our lives in such a way that brings light and truth to everyone around us, that invites people to follow Jesus, to surrender to Him, and then teach them about all that He has given to us.

Have we lost some discipleship fervor? Are we tempted to “outsource” this commission to someone else? May God give us new fire for those in our lives and new trust that it’s Jesus Himself who will draw them, do the work, and be with us forever.



### PRAYER POINTS:

1. Ask God to give you discipleship opportunities with one or two specific people this week.
2. Ask God to stir in you a passion for this kind of ministry.
3. Thank Jesus for His constant presence in your life and for fulfilling His promises.

» by Tim Meier