

UNLEASHED BY *Grace*

A 40 day prayer guide for Living Creek as we
celebrate the transition from paying off debt to
building for the future



*"those who hope in the Lord
will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
They will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint."*

Isaiah 40:31

March 7 - April 15, 2017

40 Days

What a Difference 40 Days Can Make!

First, why 40 days? Forty days was the same period of time Jesus, Moses, and Elijah fasted from eating any food. It is considered a time of dedication. It is easy to make temporary changes for a few days or a week. If you faithfully commit yourself to a new activity for 40 days, by the end you will potentially have changed your lifestyle and future destiny.

This is an exciting season for Living Creek as we transition from paying off debt, to building for the future. During these 40 days, we are asking the Living Creek family to dedicate this time to the Lord and to seek His purpose for your life and the church.

How to use the 40 Days of Prayer Journal:

1. Find a time and place where you can read it in peace.
2. If you miss a day, don't beat yourself up. Catch up the next day.
3. Don't run through it and read all of them in one sitting. Be reflective about what God may be saying to you.
4. As we all pray together on the same theme, God will continue to unite our congregation.
5. Keep your spiritual antenna up and aware. Ask God to help you notice people and situations. You will have a day, or possibly many days, when you will find a direct application from that day's devotion to your situation. When that happens you will know that God is directing you through your prayers.
6. If you have children or are married, you could possibly set aside a time in the morning or evening when you can read and pray through the journal together.
7. As we are asking God to reveal His wisdom and will for our church, seek Him for how He is calling, growing and stretching you.

Section 1:

UNLEASHED TO

Care



Day 1, March 7

Rely on God

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing”
(John 15:5).

I have a wonderful TV set. It brings news from around the world, allows me to see events that take place thousands of miles away, keeps me informed and entertained, but only if it's plugged in. Without electricity, it is nothing more than a giant paperweight. It just takes up space. It has great potential and great capability, but until it is connected to its power source, it serves no purpose.

I am the same. Unless I am “plugged in” to my spiritual power source, Jesus Christ, I am useless.

As a church, let us always remember that, on our own, we can do nothing. We may desire to make great strides for the Kingdom, to reach the lost, to witness for our Lord. But that can only happen when we make our connection to Him our first priority. Otherwise, we make great strides toward nothing—we reach the lost and find we have nothing to give them.

PRAYER:

Lord, remind us at every step that when we trust in our own understanding, rely on our own strength, and follow our own wisdom, we fail. And also remind us that when we trust and obey, seeking Your path, striving to be faithful rather than successful, then Your Kingdom advances and we fulfill our purpose. Amen.

Day 2, March 8

Our Daily Needs

Jesus gave us an example of what judgment day would look like. He said there would be the King who judges in the middle. He would separate everyone into one of two groups, the sheep on His right, and the goats on His left.

Those who were identified as the sheep would enter into eternal life. The people represented by the goats will go into eternal punishment. Then the parable explains what determined whether someone was a sheep or a goat. Did they serve Jesus by caring for the daily needs of others? Sheep serve. Goats don't.

The sheep who were rewarded by Jesus in the parable gave food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, hospitality to the stranger, clothes to the poor, and visited the sick and imprisoned. Jesus says to them, you gave me food, drink, hospitality, clothes, and visits. The sheep were scratching their woolen heads, thinking when did we do that for you personally?

Jesus responds, *“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me”* (Matthew 25:40).

There are always people around us in need. Their needs are more important and way simpler than paying a cell phone or cable bill. They need food, drink, hospitality, clothes, and visits.

One of the reasons Jesus has left us here on earth, once we are saved and have committed our lives to Him, is so we can serve Him by serving others. The compassion and love of Christ is multiplied through our feet going and our hands serving.

The disciples saw the hunger of 5,000 people who were listening all day to Jesus teach. They suggested they go away to their homes. Jesus had another idea. He said, *“You give them something to eat”* (Matthew 14:16).

When you see a need, give something.

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for all Your provisions. Thank You for our abundance of our daily needs. Help us to be willing to share and to bless others. Receive our gifts to those in need just like You receive our tithes and offerings to Your Kingdom. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 3, March 9

A Search for Truth

“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free”
(John 8:32).

What comes to mind when you hear the word truth? “Truth,” “the ultimate reality, truth is what actually is.” Sometimes people hunger and seek to know the future about their lives. This is generally demonstrated through horoscopes, psychics, fortune tellers, and so on. When we hunger and seek after these types of worldly wisdom it brings much confusion, insecurities, and we are left empty. Many of us don't read the Bible to see what God has to say about our future. Unfortunately, we seek man's ideologies, philosophies, and myths for the truth.

By contrast, Jesus states that He is *“the way, the truth, and the life”* (John 14:6). He is what the world needs now and for the future. The gospel message proclaimed is the power of God that sets people free from the consequences of sin, Satan, self deception and the world. As a result, *“having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness”* (Romans 6:18). Righteousness is what overcomes sin. If we are established in righteousness the Holy Spirit gives us the power to overcome temptations of worldly wisdom. By knowing and recognizing this reality it shows us the way to eternal life with God the Father. Jesus is our hope and He is the only source of truth we have.

PRAYER:

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Son, Christ Jesus, He is the Truth. Without Him there would be no righteousness. It was His blood that was the acceptable payment for the forgiveness of sins. Please forgive us for substituting worldly wisdom for Your truth. Give us a heart that wants to know Your truth and the value of applying it in our lives daily. Amen.

Day 4, March 10

Unity for All People

“Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind” (Philippians 2:2).

Can we truly be a church where our differences stop at the door? Will we stand side-by-side for the single cause of Christ? Can we care for the world without accommodating its secular views?

We are a diverse body of believers, different in many ways. Yet those differences help to extend our outreach, not prevent us from functioning as a unified body of believers. Unity does not mean “same,” it means to be “united in purpose.” Our connection through the transformation of the Holy Spirit should make us strong in that purpose and inseparable in our bond.

Yet the Christian church is in jeopardy of coming apart at the very core of what is intended to hold it together. Our unity is continually challenged as the secular world presses the church to change its focus; elevating individual freedoms to a position of greater significance than biblical truth.

We know Jesus died for all people. He reached out to sinners and unbelievers, yet He didn't fail to lovingly speak the truth regarding their hopeless condition. Jesus embraced the lost, not their sin.

Caring about lost souls is our commission. Understanding the work of the Holy Spirit in us and through us is our obligation. If we first unite in prayer, we will find ourselves united in purpose.

PRAYER:

Father, unify us in You. Fill us with Your Spirit and keep us of the same mind, with the same love and in full accord with Your desires, for both us and the world around us. Amen.

Day 5, March 11

A Need for Godly Leadership

Did you know that Jesus called us to be godly leaders?

Leadership is influence.

It starts with leading ourselves.

Next, we lead others by our example.

Jesus calls His followers with His example: Love others. Serve others.

The greatest leaders are the greatest servers.

As godly leaders, we understand who is involved and why.

Understand who Jesus is.

“And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way” (Ephesians 1:22-23).

Understand who we are because of Jesus.

“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved” (Ephesians 2:4-5).

Understand why Jesus called us.

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God” (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Paul, in Ephesians, gives us an idea of the big picture. (Remember: faith, not complete understanding, is required.) We now get to go out and share the reason for our hope: the Good News of Jesus Christ. Leaders who understand who they are in Christ equip other believers to do the same. The work of all believers is ministry. This work is not just for church staff and elders, but also worship leaders, volunteers and every other believer!

PRAYER:

Lord, Jesus, thank You for allowing us to walk with You in prayer. Thank You for the saving work that is your Grace. All authority, all power comes from You. Help us today in the work You have called us to do. Help us to lead and equip others with the help of Your Holy Spirit and all the power that Your authority allows. Amen.

Day 6, March 12

Strong Marriages

One of the essential themes of Jesus' ministry, was that He cared for people. Matthew 9:36 says, "*When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them.*" When it comes to marriages in the church, there is no shortage of issues. As a body of Christ, we are called to be examples to the world. Our marriages need to be examples of what works to the rest of the world. The reason they work is because Jesus provided that model for us. "*For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.*" This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5:31-32). Paul wanted the Ephesian church to understand what it meant to model a godly marriage. He also wanted the body of Christ to Himself as His bride, and to live a Holy life for Him. Whether you're single, married, wanting to be married, or once was married, the church has a responsibility as the bride of Christ to her husband.

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, thank You for leading Your Church and loving us. Help us to represent You well, as a bride beautifully adorned for her King. Raise up marriages from our church that will represent You, and Your love for us. Raise up Godly spouses for those waiting for them. Heal the broken marriages that need Your hand upon them. Lord, we pray that Living Creek would represent You well, and always be attractive towards the unbeliever.

In Jesus' Holy name, Amen.

Day 7, March 13

The Foundation of Family

Imagine that your home is in a floodplain. A huge storm strikes the area with record wind, rain, and flooding. When the storm is over and the waters subside, what is the condition of your home?

Jesus used that analogy to describe a wise and foolish builder (Matthew 7:24-27). One built on the rock, the other on sand. The home on the rock stood, yet possibly with a few scrapes and in need of some minor repair. But the home built on sand was gone, completely demolished. Families are like the houses we live in. So how is the foundation of your family and how are you building on it?

As goes the family, so goes the culture and its faith. Like Jesus' parable of the two builders, we need to prepare for storms. Jesus was a realist. Our way of life and our values will be attacked as followers of Jesus. The family is also under attack.

While we hope it never happens, is your family prepared for the storm? How will your family handle a tragedy, disease of a family member, or death of a family member?

The best solution is to build a great foundation from the ground up. It starts with spiritual leadership in the home, a single parent or a mother and father together, taking a stand and teaching their faith to the next generation. It is a home where the words and the reading from the Bible are common. It is a home where there is obvious trust in the Lord and prayer of Thanksgiving for everything received.

When Joshua stood before the nation of Israel, he couldn't speak for the nation about their promised faithfulness to God, but he could speak for the family he led. He said, *"But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord"* (Joshua 24:15).

PRAYER:

Lord, help us to build strong families. Whether we are a single member in a family who supports and encourages others, or a large family with many people, let us live by faith and let You reign in our hearts and our homes. We desire to build our lives on You and Your words. In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

Day 8, March 14

Successful Parenting

“These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

“Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it” (Proverbs 22:6).

Parents have been given an important job. The church has a responsibility to support and encourage them. They are under constant pressure to achieve success. Culture is pushing a different agenda; is the church clearly articulating the alternative? The answer can determine the goals parents achieve at every stage of their children's lives. American parents face challenges determining how to pass along their faith. They feel under equipped to share something that they do not fully grasp themselves. Our challenge as a church is to move families from occasional attendance and marginal connectedness to engagement. We cannot simply direct them to read Deuteronomy 6 or attend our weekly service and say we have done a good job of supporting them. The church must partner with the parents during each phase of their children's lives and offer support, encouragement, and information to help them fulfill the goal of Proverbs 22:6. In a recent study, 72% of parents polled stated they believe that the church would be a helpful resource to help them develop a parenting plan. We, as the church, need to be faithful to define the Biblical world view and help parents as they pour into their children's lives.

PRAYER:

Lord, please help us provide the grace and support that parents need. Strengthen the families in Your church, let us be a resource to the parents. Help us to support the single, divorced, and married parents as we strive to help them impart a Biblical world view to their children. Let the parents of this community find a path to You for themselves and their children. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 9, March 15

Contentment Instead of Greed

“People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs” (1 Timothy 6:9-10).

It's not that there's anything wrong with money. Paul wrote from his prison cell that he knew what it was like to have little and he knew what it was like to have plenty. But greed can destroy contentment. Most of us in this country are wealthy compared to the rest of the world. We need to use our “wealth” wisely; to own it instead of it owning us.

In Max Lucado's book “When God Whispers Your Name,” he writes: “We are not satisfied. As a child we can say, ‘If only I were a teenager.’ As a teen we say, ‘If only I were an adult.’ As an adult, ‘If only I were married.’ As a spouse, ‘If only I had kids.’ As a parent, ‘If only my kids were grown.’ In an empty house, ‘If only the kids would visit.’ As a retiree in the rocking chair with stiff joints and fading sight, ‘If only I were a child again.’”

Why is contentment so difficult? Because there is nothing on earth that can satisfy our deepest longings. We long to see God.

PRAYER:

Lord, help me to be content. Show me how to avoid the traps of temptation. Thank You for revealing to me that the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Teach me to be content with what You have provided. And remind me every day that all that I have comes from You. I will use what You have given me for Your glory. Amen.

Day 10, March 16

Faith Instead of Fear

“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2).

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10).

In today's world, fear is an emotion that we must deal with practically every day. People are fearful and scared by all of the conflict and violence that is reported daily in the news. It is important to remember that our faith can sustain us during these trying times. The psalmist declared his trust and faith in God. Psalm 56:3 states, *“When I am afraid, I will trust in you”* and Psalm 27:1 explains that *“The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear?”* As the words of an old hymn state, “This world is not my home, I'm just a-passing through.” By keeping our eyes upon Jesus, our fears will lessen and our faith will be increased. We cannot do this on our own. The Holy Spirit will guide us. All we have to do is to put our complete trust in the Lord as we seek His presence in prayer daily.

PRAYER:

Dear God, help us to trust in You as we continue our journey through this life. May our daily motto be, “Faith instead of Fear.” Strengthen us and teach us to depend on You more and more each day. Amen.

Day 11, March 17

Peace When Grieving

“Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy...I have told you these things so that in me you will have peace” (John 16:22; 33).

Webster defines grief as “intense emotional suffering caused by loss.” Jesus spoke with His disciples prior to His crucifixion as they were even then beginning to grieve because of the words He was speaking to them. Indeed, they were not immune to the gamut of emotions we also experience when we grieve. Our emotions can range from anger, to denial, to bargaining and eventually, through searching and prayer, we can begin to experience acceptance and peace. In these anxious and confusing moments, Jesus assures us that our grief will not last, but will turn to joy when we are reunited with Him and those we have loved. In this world, He has said that we will know trouble and times of grief, but Jesus has overcome!

PRAYER:

Father, Thank You for Your promise You have given. Even in our times of hurting and grief, we can know the peace that only You can give. Help us to focus on the joy we will know when we see You face to face. Let us continue to claim Your perfect peace as we keep our minds on Thee. Amen.

Day 12, March 18

Grace Instead of Judgment

Grace means we get something that we don't deserve, unmerited favor; something we not only receive, but that we also share with those we encounter.

God is abundant in grace. His greatest act of grace is the gift of salvation that He made available for all people through faith.

As a result of accepting His grace, He promises eternal life. It's the promise of a home one day in heaven with Him. His promise is sealed with the Holy Spirit as a guarantee that one day Jesus the Christ will indeed return to earth to claim His purchased possession.

Jesus purchased every sinner with His own blood on the cross at Calvary.

"The bridge of grace will bear your weight, brother. Thousands of big sinners have gone across that bridge, yea, tens of thousands have gone over it. Some have been the chief of sinners and some have come at the very last of their days but the arch has never yielded beneath their weight. I will go with them trusting to the same support. It will bear me over as it has for them." ~ **Charles Spurgeon**

"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1-2).

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus Christ, may Your grace be evident in us.
Father, may Your love shine from us.
Holy Spirit, may Your presence be known in us,
from now and evermore. Amen.

Day 13, March 19

Financial Peace

“Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can’t take anything with us when we leave it. So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content. But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction” (1 Timothy 6:6-9, NLT).

How can it be that in today’s America, there can be so much affluence, so many comforts and abundant resources, yet so much discontent with what we have? There seems to be a constant disconnect between our desires and our needs. The average family is burdened by consumer debt and installment payments on homes and autos. Often, the demands at work are greater, leaving less time with family. Marriages are stressed. And our God grieves for His children.

The apostle Paul understood this well. Once a wealthy and popular man in Jewish power circles, he sacrificed everything to follow Jesus and pursue something much greater and longer lasting - godliness. Paul knew what it was like to have much and he knew what it was like to have little. But he realized that a life of desiring God (godliness) leads to something peaceful - contentment. Paul found that lasting contentment was the feeling that comes from finding satisfaction in Christ and trusting God to meet His daily needs.

PRAYER:

Dear God, there are people all around us who don’t know Jesus and don’t experience the financial peace that comes through Him alone. Help us to be a church that models contentment and teaches that the desire to love and trust God has far greater rewards than earthly wealth and more stuff. Give us ears and eyes to recognize the pain around us. In the name of Jesus, the One who offers real peace. Amen.

Day 14, March 20

Hope for Tomorrow and Eternity

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

I was standing on a makeshift stage in the second largest slum in all of Africa. Staring into a sea of hungry, homeless faces, I thought, how can I possibly witness to these people who have nothing when I have so much? And then it hit me.

"Being here today," I began, "I realize that the country I come from is very poor." I went on to explain that we have so much in America that we no longer recognize our need for God. I talked about the truth that connects us all no matter where we live or what we have. This world is only temporary. Whatever we suffer or gain here will wash away. We must fix our eyes on our hope for eternity, Jesus.

The moment was bigger than me. God was moving. People cried as they came forward and asked for prayer. Many accepted Christ that very day. Ironically, I had no idea I would be giving a testimony to a crowd on this trip. I thought I was going to provide a water supply.

There are so many needs in this world, but none of them are as important as salvation. And nothing satisfies as greatly as the hope we have in Christ. He conquered sin once and for all. Through Him, we have all we could ever need.

PRAYER:

Dear Jesus, You are our One true hope, our One true peace. Let us not only cling to the hope we have in Your salvation, but give us the courage to share that hope with the world. Amen.

Section 2:

UNLEASHED FOR A
Purpose



Day 15, March 21

Our Mission - Helping people follow Jesus

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the one that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15).

When you speak to a stranger for more than a few minutes you begin to understand their passions. It could be they speak excitedly about their family, a sports team, a hobby, or their career. Some of these people might display their passion in their clothes and jewelry they are wearing, or even an exposed tattoo.

What would the stranger learn about you after a few minutes of conversation? If we are following Jesus as the Lord of our lives, it should eventually become obvious to the other person.

Jesus died for everyone in the world yet the Bible says that not everyone will be saved. It will only be those who follow Jesus on the “narrow path” that will make it to eternal life. If you are on that path, you are called to help people find the way to Jesus Christ. It doesn't matter if they have never followed him, or if they have lost their way and left the path, we are to help them follow Christ more closely.

At Living Creek, we pray that we will always be ready to “give the reason for the hope” that we have in Jesus Christ. Making it to eternal life in Heaven and taking as many people as possible with us should be our greatest passion.

PRAYER:

God in Heaven, help us to be passionate about the hope of eternal life which we only have in Jesus Christ. Help our faith to become respectfully obvious to those around us. Help our words to be inviting to others. And may we never be ashamed of the One who died to give us life. Amen.

Day 16, March 22

Our Values

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42).

Do you ever wonder what it was like to be a part of the first church in Jerusalem. It was different than today. They had no buildings, nor orderly church services. They met daily in homes. On the first day of the week they had a simple service including the Lord’s supper.

Yet we relate to them today by seeking to represent Christ with certain values. Acts 2:42 describes 4 specific values among others taught in the New Testament: Teaching (doctrine and truth), Fellowship (sharing in meals and needs of each other), Breaking of bread (literally the breaking of “the” bread, the Lord’s supper), and Prayer.

At Living Creek we have identified a list of 5 values which are very similar. These seem to be sincerely represented in our church fellowship:

Truth - teaching the Bible as our authority and foundation

Grace - daily receiving and sharing God’s mercy

Prayer - accessing the power of God’s Spirit for the church

Worship - seeking God with honesty and passion

Integrity - servant leaders accountable to God and the church

Our desire is that we don’t just aspire to attain these, but that it is obvious we are a church with a reputation for these values at work now, while still in the process of improvement.

How about you? If someone asked what you value, what would you say? More importantly, what values would your life reveal through your actions to those who are watching?

PRAYER:

God and Father, You are holy and perfect. You sent Jesus to us to be an example of how You intended us to live. May the values we display and live out everyday glorify You, and display consistency to the world who is watching. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 17, March 23

Our Target - Reaching families who are turning to the Lord

What is family in today's world? We can't think of it as only parents, children, aunts, uncles, and grandparents all in a tight group supporting each other. We need to look at things as they are in the real world. There are single moms raising children, single dads on their own with kids, and grandparents raising the children of their children. There is the young adult who has no one in their life except for those people who are leading them down the wrong path. What do we do as a church?

In Acts 15, Peter stood up before the Elders of the church to speak about how hard or difficult it should be for people who had lived a different kind of life to enter the Kingdom of God. The Jews wanted Gentiles to obey the Old Testament law of Moses before they could enter.

Peter said, *"We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."* *"It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God"* (Acts 15:11; 19).

So as a church, let us remember that everyone is welcome in the house of the Lord. We need to remove barriers for those with different backgrounds; those who have a different definition of family. As they turn to the Lord and His will for their lives, it will be by grace they are saved, just like us.

PRAYER:

Lord, lead us to these families so we can show them love as You would, without putting undue burdens on them. Let Your love and grace show, through us, what can happen in the lives of people if they trust in You and not in this world. We ask this in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Day 18, March 24

Our Niche - Living Creek is the simple church where differences stop at the door.

"I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought" (1 Corinthians 1:10).

We surveyed some people a few years ago to ask them, how would you describe Living Creek in one or two sentences. Our Niche statement listed above, emerged out of that discussion.

One of the things which divides Christianity is how we worship. There are divisions over the order of worship, man-made traditions, the style of worship, and even how we dress for worship.

At Living Creek we seek to keep things as simple as possible, shaken down to the main parts of worship without making it complicated, confusing, or divisive. That simple church idea seems to be attractive not only to people already attending, but it is what most attracts the non-churched to worship and seek God today.

Living Creek is called to be a special family made up of diverse people. We need to continue to be a place where people from all backgrounds and circumstances can come together and be united as children of God. Although someone could come into Living Creek and begin to mentally separate us into groups of people based on any number of factors, we want to drop all of those differences and simply be known as Christians.

Let's pray that our church will be known as a place where ALL are welcome.

PRAYER:

Lord, we thank You that You gave Your son, Jesus, as a sacrifice for our sins. We know that You love all people and that Your grace is meant for all of us. Help us to accept and love all the people that walk in the door and let us be known as a place for everyone to come and encounter Your perfect love and forgiveness. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 19, March 25

Our Vision

“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10).

When was the last time that you lost your keys? That’s annoying, right? Have you ever misplaced your wallet or purse? That’s frustrating! Have you ever lost your child in a store? That’s terrifying! The tough thing about losing a child in a store is that oftentimes the child doesn’t know that he is lost. He will continue to wander throughout the store, perhaps looking at the toys and being temporarily mesmerized by the colorful, plastic wonderland. The child doesn’t even realize he is lost and can continue to happily wander around the store for quite some time. At some point, the child looks around and finally realizes that he is lost and then the panic sets in.

Friends, there are people all around us who are lost. Many of them don’t even know it! They are happily living their lives to the best of their ability. They might be kind, generous, and even helpful people who are being “good people” because that’s what they were taught as children, but they are lost. We have a God-sized goal of reaching 1% of the people within a 10 mile radius of Living Creek Christian Church locations. This can only happen one person at a time. There is no possible way this can happen due to any one person’s efforts. The staff can’t do it alone, nor can the elders.

Would you pray with us that we would be effective in reaching the lost just as Jesus came into this world?

PRAYER:

Father, we pray that You would open our eyes around us to the thousands of people who are lost and in need of a Savior. We know that You will draw all people to You when we lift up Your name, so Lord help us to do that. We ask for courage to speak to our co-workers, neighbors, friends, and family who need You. Give us the words to say. May we be known as a church where people meet You and the lost are found. We pray this in Jesus’ name, Amen.

Section 3:

UNLEASHED TO

Act



Day 20, March 26

Unleashed to Live

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have LIFE, and have it to the full” (John 10:10).

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship” (Romans 12:1).

The life God gives is abundantly richer and fuller. Life in Christ is lived on a higher plane because of His overflowing forgiveness, love, and guidance. But what does it mean to live a FULL LIFE in Christ? God wants us to offer ourselves as *“living sacrifices,”* daily laying aside our own desires to follow Him, putting all of our energy and resources at His feet and trusting Him to guide us. We do this out of gratitude because of His sacrifice. It is an act of worship on our part.

There is a song that says, “I will not offer anything that cost me nothing.” That’s sacrifice, it will cost something; your time, money, or sometimes, even your pride! It’s also a daily sacrifice, a selfless act of kindness or service, using talents for His glory and not earthly accolades.

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, thank You, for allowing me to live an earthly life while still homesick, and longing for Heaven. Let me be, and show Christ in all that I do. Let my daily acts of worship be holy, acceptable, and worthy to You. Thank You for the model of sacrifice, that by Christ dying on the cross, You show Your abundant love and grace to us. Amen.

Day 21, March 27

Unleashed to Love/Honor God

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment”
(Matthew 22:36-38).

A simple command, and yet, impossible to follow. Let’s take Peter, for example. Here was an apostle who claimed he’d never leave Jesus’ side, but denied him publicly three times the very same night.

See, when Peter tried to love Jesus in his own strength, he failed; miserably.

But this was no surprise to Jesus. He knew Peter would betray Him. He didn’t approach the cross feeling abandoned by His friend. He went full of love, knowing that Peter’s life depended on it. After receiving Jesus’ grace, Peter received another gift: the Holy Spirit, who changed Peter from the inside out. As he began to live in the Spirit, his whole life became a daily act of worship and love for God. Peter began living without fear. He evangelized, performed miracles, and even died for his Lord.

The truth is that on our own, we may try, but we fail to fully love the Lord. And yet, He loves us with all of His heart, His soul, and His mind. And if we daily ask Him to fill us with His Holy Spirit, and to show us what His heart beats for, we too can find our lives becoming a daily act of worship.

PRAYER:

Holy Spirit, come fill me. Change me on the inside that I may be more and more like Jesus. Take away my fear as You attune my heart with the Father’s. May we, as a congregation allow You to transform us from the inside out, so that our daily lives become depictions of our love for the Father. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 22, March 28

Unleashed to Love People

"Let all that you do be done in love" (1 Corinthians 16:14, ESV).

"Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends" (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a, ESV).

Have you ever visited or attend a church and felt all alone, even though there were people everywhere? May we challenge ourselves to have the eyes of Jesus to look for those who are alone, or look like they could use a friend or those we have never seen before. Possibly this is their first time at Living Creek. We have a wonderful Welcome Team in our parking lot and at our front doors, but I pray that as they walk through the lobby or in the auditorium or wherever they are at Rich South, they would feel Jesus' love surround them through each of us at Living Creek.

May we pray in the days ahead to look for those we can love. There are so many hurting people all around us: neighbors, in the stores, restaurants, sporting events, schools, small groups. Wherever we are, God can use each of us in mighty ways to love others through our words, actions, kindness, gentleness, patience, humility, and forgiveness. Love never ends.

PRAYER:

Dear Heavenly Father, as we pray today and in the days ahead, may God touch and use each of us mightily. May we open our hearts and minds to those You want us to love, pray for, reach out to, or become a friend to. As we seek You Father, please let us be still before you and listen to Your promptings; to reach out of our comfort zones; to lovingly serve one another; *"and walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God"* (Ephesians 5:2, ESV). In Your precious name we pray, Amen.

Day 23, March 29

Unleashed to See and Hear Needs Around Us

David Livingstone said, "If a commission by an earthly king is considered an honor, how can a commission by a Heavenly King be considered a sacrifice?" Jesus said, "*All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age*" (Matthew 28:18). Jesus commissioned His Church to continue the mission He started on earth. To do this, we have to be aware of our surroundings. God has placed Living Creek in a unique position to reach many people by having ministry centers in Monee, and worship space in Richton Park. While we strive to reach 1% of the population around us, the mission doesn't stop with those few. The message of hope from Jesus is for all people, and at Living Creek we need to be aware of all people.

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, thank You for entrusting us with Your mission. God we need to have ears to hear Your words, eyes to see the people, and a heart to love them like You do. Let Your body at Living Creek be willing to go wherever You tell us to bring Your mission. Help us to meet the needs of the people around us both physically and spiritually. Help us to finish the race well, and never stop proclaiming Your good news until the moment You return. In Jesus' Holy name, Amen.

Day 24, March 30

Unleashed to Serve

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it" (Psalm 24:1).

"You are not your own; you were bought at a price"
(1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

When two children want the same object, you will often hear both of them say, "Let go! This is mine." Some of us grow up and continue to play that game. We want more time or money for the time we invest. ("This is mine! I deserve it.") We want more from a relationship. ("You owe me!")

Can you imagine how our possessiveness is perceived by God? He is watching from Heaven and wants to remind us, "Let go! That is mine." Everything in the world is the Lord's. We are simply managers of all we have.

The interesting thing is, we don't even own ourselves. God bought us through the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross. We are His. How does God want you, His son or daughter, to live? Where does God want you to go? What does God want you to say? He paid for you. You are His.

PRAYER:

God and Father, we acknowledge that nothing we have is our own. Everything is Yours. God, we also commit our life to You. It is Yours, also. Order our steps this day. Help us to do and say only that which is pleasing to You. Amen!

Day 25, March 31

Unleashed to Go

“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I. Send me!’” (Isaiah 6:8).

Sometimes it's just that simple.

God points out a need, and you take care of it - not the government, not the church deacons, not the pastor - **you**.

No committee, no planning sessions, no budget projections, just one person doing what they are led to do.

I believe that when we pray for some need to be met, for God to handle some situation, He often answers by saying, “Well, what have you got planned for this afternoon?”

PRAYER:

Lord, we are convinced that You will equip us for any task You set before us. We trust that, even though we may be untrained and inexperienced, You can use us for Your purposes. And, in whatever You may have us do, if we follow Your leading, we work to Your glory. We wish to be a tool in Your hand, Lord. Keep us sharp and close by. Amen.

Day 26, April 1

Unleashed to Give

"You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:11).

Do you find it hard to receive a gift from someone else? The more prone you are to pride and independence the harder it becomes to receive gifts. You might even have heard some generous person say, "Don't rob me of my blessing to give."

It goes both ways doesn't it? When we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord, we have received what is called an "incredible gift" of grace. When we give back to God and to others, there is great joy and a satisfaction of being generous. God wired us this way. So we must freely receive and freely give in order to bless others.

Maybe this explains best what it means to be a "cheerful giver." We cheerfully receive gifts from others and we keep the blessing going as we cheerfully give to God and others. At Living Creek we pray that we can all continue to be a cheerful conduit through which the blessings of God will flow.

PRAYER:

Father of Heaven, the giver of all good gifts, thank You for Your provision to us. Thank You for our education, our jobs, our abilities and even our friends, all of which You use to bless us. Help us to not be selfish, but to continue passing on the blessing through our generosity for the needs of others and the church of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Day 27, April 2

Unleashed to Tell

"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes..." (Romans 1:16).

At times we forget what God has called us to do for Him. Sometimes we don't understand how God wants to use us to fulfill His purpose in reaching the whole world for Christ. I love to look at the mosaic pictures in the school hallway. They use hundreds of tiny individual pictures to create one larger picture.

This is what the body of Christ is like. As each of us understands that it is our purpose to share Christ with others, the overall picture becomes clearer. Some of us might say, "I can't talk about my faith to others. I don't know what to say." If this is your fear, remember that someone once said "actions speak louder than words."

So look for opportunities to show your faith to others in unexpected ways. Don't look for what you can get out of sharing Christ. Look for what God can get out of your sharing. You are one picture in a huge masterpiece that God is painting. Go and fulfill the purpose God has given you.

PRAYER:

Father, give me the courage and the opportunity to speak for You today. Help me to proudly carry the message of Jesus that has been sent to everyone. Let the power of the gospel change me and may the change be obvious to those around me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 28, April 3

Unleashed to Lead

“And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:27).

True Christianity is hard. A life given over to Jesus is a cross to bear. It requires effort and concentration, work and sacrifice.

In many parts of the world following Christ puts one's life in danger. There are places in which evangelism is a capital crime. And it seems that the Christians in those parts of the world nearly burst with faith. Their lives are filled to overflowing with the Spirit. The cross they bear, and the grace by which they bear it, is obvious to all.

In America, we live in a society in which it is pretty easy to be a Christian. No one is tossed into jail for reading a Bible. No one gets fired from their job for attending a church service. Oh, the media might snicker at us, and our politicians may patronize us, but we generally pay no real price for our faith. So, it is tempting to drift along with an “easy” faith, a faith that makes no demands, requires no sacrifices, causes us no distress.

Our Enemy is subtle. He knows that a faith that never faces difficulty never grows strong. He knows that a faith that never requires anything from us can never give anything to us.

So our cross is of a different kind, not as obvious, but no less heavy.

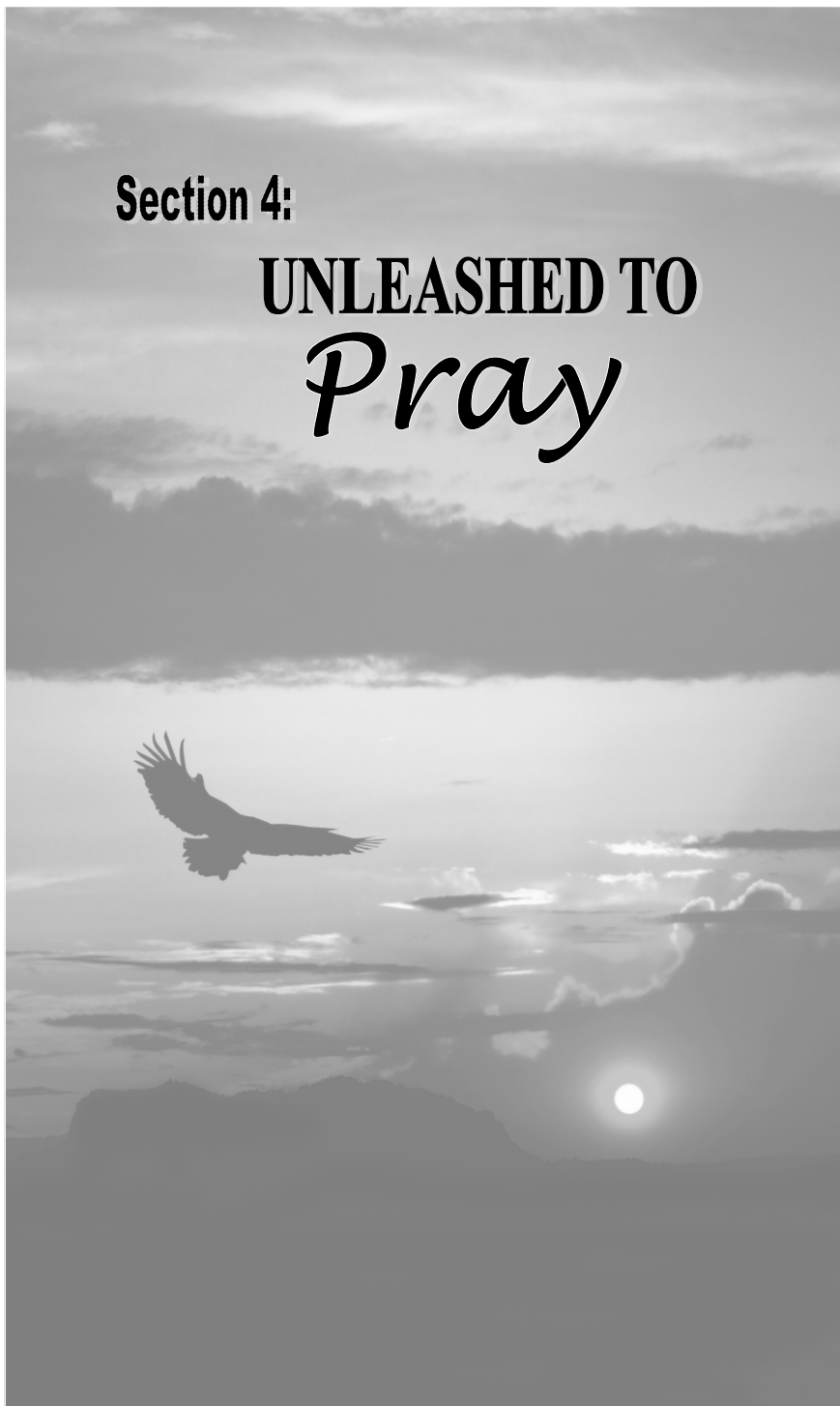
We must constantly resist the urge to stay comfortable, constantly be on guard against taking the easy road, constantly seek to reach a world that, though it may not persecute us, also doesn't take us seriously. That task is not as clear-cut as that faced by some, but it is no less a burden. And carrying it requires no less of God's grace.

PRAYER:

Lord, help us to realize that it must be our goal to radically change this world, not just live at peace with it. It must be our goal to lead lives that are inspirational, not merely comfortable. It must be our goal to inform this lost world that “good enough” isn't good enough—that there is something better. Amen.

Section 4:

UNLEASHED TO
Pray



Day 29, April 4

Pray for Wisdom

“The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray” (1 Peter 4:7).

Nothing helps us improve our focus more than a sense of urgency. We realize there is no time left for procrastination, excuses, or the passion for lesser priorities. We need that sense of urgency in our pursuit of God’s wisdom through prayer for our lives and for our church.

There is an urgency to be ready for the day of Christ’s return. Our culture makes it easy and obvious to see how people could be unprepared for the end of time. Some of us are so distracted that we might not recognize that the end is near.

There is an urgency to be focused, to be clear minded. The text above suggests we can not pray effectively if we don’t remove the clutter from the thoughts in our heads.

There is also the urgency to be disciplined, self-controlled. Protecting a place, time, and attitude required for intimacy with God means saying no to some other things in our life, which may seem rewarding but lack the power and potential of truly communing with God in prayer.

As we continue these 40 days we need to find a place of solitude and a time of day when we can seek God’s wisdom.

PRAYER:

Father in Heaven, help me to clear my thoughts of distractions that keep me from being focused on You and what You are doing in the world around me. Help me to see Your hand move and prepare the way for me in my schedule, my relationships and my commitments. Provide a time and place for me to detach from the world around me and connect more directly to Your spirit. Reveal Your will and wisdom for me and for Living Creek. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 30, April 5

Pray to be Debt-free

“Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continued debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellow man has fulfilled the law”
(Romans 13:8).

Our culture is run by debt, from the national debt of the United States, to businesses, students, and to each citizen. The average household debt, including mortgages in America is \$132,000. Average credit card debt per household is \$16,000. Even churches have overleveraged themselves and are enslaved by debt.

How wonderful it would be as a church, to have no more outstanding expenses. We would be able to focus more on expanding His Kingdom. Living Creek has come a long way in the past 3 years. As of the publishing of this Prayer Journal, We have only approximately \$26,000 of remaining debt on the 48 acres of land in Monee. We praise the Lord for His provision and for everyone’s generosity to make this possible.

Join our leaders in praying for the day when we are debt free. It might possibly happen during these 40 days of prayer! We also pray that this ministry will be so well managed going forward that any expenses we have will not enslave the church or hinder our future potential for God’s Kingdom.

There is a debt we will always owe. The debt of love. We owe love to one another in the church. We owe love to those who have yet to receive the love of Christ, which we already possess.

PRAYER:

Lord, we seek Your wisdom. Show us how we can be debt free. Make it known to us how to use the land in Monee, so that it serves Your purpose for Your people. Point us in the right direction Lord; we only want what best serves You. We ask these things in Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 31, April 6

Pray for the Investment of our Land

“A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path...Some fell on rocky places...Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times” (Mark 4:3-8).

A significant portion of the land Living Creek is paying off in Monee is rented out to a farmer. Each year he plants seeds to get an annual crop. His yield varies from year to year.

Jesus explains the parable of the sower. In the text above, it is not about farming, but about the Kingdom of God. It is like a field. There is spiritual seed that is sown. The harvest is not annual, but eternal. The produce of the land is represented by the souls of those who have been multiplied into the kingdom.

There has also been spiritual seed planted on the property Living Creek purchased in Monee. Every dollar given was a seed of faith. Every one of the thousands of prayers prayed on the land or for the land are seeds of faith we have planted for a future harvest.

Since purchasing the land several years ago, the economy and growth slowed in the area. In the last year there has been growth in commercial interests and investors. As the Lord of Heaven reigns over all things, He is also Lord of every piece of land in the world, including Living Creek's property.

God may have in mind for some commercial interest to make an offer on the whole property, leaving Living Creek with resources to purchase and build nearby. He could have in mind for us to sell off a portion of it with the proceeds going toward building a home for the church. He could have in mind to use the whole parcel for ministry through Living Creek.

Please pray for God's will to be done with the Monee land. It is a goal of the leaders to access all options and make a strategy in 2017 for the next step for Living Creek's home. In this season, we are investing in a future harvest through prayer.

PRAYER:

God in Heaven, we invest ourselves, our resources, and our prayers for a future, abundant harvest for Your Kingdom. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 32, April 7

Pray for a New Home

“Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah” (Acts 5:42).

“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands” (Acts 17:24).

The early Christians did not have a church building in any town for over 100 years. You may wonder, how in the world did the local churches meet and accomplish the mission?

We are thankful for God's provision of our current locations for meetings: Rich South Auditorium on Sundays, and the Ministry Center and offices on the other days of the week. We have been blessed.

The strategic planning team at Living Creek has been considering the next steps for our church. We continue to be faithful in giving to pay down the debt on the land. It seems obvious that the construction of a new building on the property in Monee will still be several years into the future. Could God's will be more greatly fulfilled at Living Creek with a transition space, from where we are, prior to building on the property?

If we stayed in our current locations there are some challenges. Our Children's Ministry staff does a great job with the limited space that is not ideal. The ministry of The Well for our teens is already at capacity. There are ministries and events we would like to host, but don't have a large multi-purpose area to do so.

We ask you to join us in asking God if it would be wise, and in His will, to consider leasing a transition space in the near future, between our current locations, and our future home. Would there be a location where we could host Sunday services and have multi-purpose space for the congregation?

PRAYER:

God in heaven, You have always been a provider for Your children. We ask You to direct us in wisdom according to Your will for the place where Living Creek can bring You the most glory. If You have a transition space that could support and serve as a home for this ministry in the near future, please make the opportunity obvious to us at Living Creek through Your Holy Spirit. In the name of Jesus, we pray, Amen.

Day 33, April 8

Pray for Prayer to Reach Children and Youth

"We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, His power, and the wonders He has done" (Psalm 78:4).

The Barna Research Group surveys demonstrate that American children ages 5 to 13 have a 32% probability of accepting Christ, but youth or teens aged 14 to 18 have only a 4% probability of doing so. Adults age 19 and over have just a 6% probability of becoming Christians. George Barna stated, at a recent conference, that statistically what a person believes on their 13th birthday is what they will believe for their life. Another study confirms that of believers surveyed, 85% of the people state that they accepted Christ between the ages of 4 and 14; 10% replied that they accepted Jesus between age 15 and 30.

These two surveys highlight the importance of children and youth ministries working with parents to help shape the Biblical world view of their children. Our church needs to be a place for families to come and learn more about our faith, about our Savior and create an environment that welcomes and reaches children and youth. Many young people in our area come from broken homes and some teens may even come without their parents. The "We" in verse 4 above is you. All members of this church should participate in the effort at whatever level God determines.

PRAYER:

Lord, We love You and know how You love children. We understand that this church is Your beacon to the families and young people in this community. Please bless us as we step up the effort to reach the children and youth in our neighborhood. Please guide us as we join as a church to reach these young people's hearts for You. We strive to connect the hearts of these children and youth to Your heart. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 34, April 9

Pray for Growth in Fellowship

At Living Creek, one of our core values is that we are a people of prayer. "Prayer – accessing the power of God's Spirit on behalf of the Church." Jesus prayed many times during his ministry. He often withdrew from others, so that He could pray for strength for Himself and His followers.

Jesus said, *"The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me"* (John 17:22-23).

One of the greatest strengths we have as a church, is being united through the love of Christ. One of the ways that we unite, is to come together through fellowship. As a church on the move without a physical building, we get to be creative about how we do ministry.

The Acts church modeled what we hope Living Creek will embody.

Acts 2:42 says, *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayers."* Fellowship comes in many forms. We want to be bold about praying for a permanent ministry location where we can be most effective for the Kingdom!

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, thank You for the ministry of Living Creek. As we strive to be Godly examples to those around us, we want to be aware of ministries that need our assistance. Lord, open up opportunities to serve, and raise up new people that would be willing to be used by You. Father, we pray for a permanent location where we can be effective for Your Kingdom. We want to reach the lost and love like Jesus. Help Your church to be a living example of You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 35, April 10

Pray for Future Staff

“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-13).

One of God's gifts to Living Creek are our many great leaders. Some of them serve as members of ministry teams, others serve as ministry leaders, deacons, elders and staff. Our leaders, according to the text above, are all gifts from Jesus Christ. Are you an active part of the ministry of the church? You are not here by accident. Everyone has something to contribute.

When each person is fully living out Christ's purpose for them, the body of Christ, the church, is built up, mature and as strong as possible. Consider your place and purpose in helping to build up the ministry of Living Creek.

There are people yet to join us and who we are yet to meet. Will you join us in asking God to continue to provide the gifts and the leadership we need for the maturing and growth of the congregation?

Some of the people God already is preparing to serve at Living Creek may be someone you will meet today. They may end up leading a ministry or even serving you or your children in the future. We ask God to give us every person we need to be a complete ministry.

PRAYER:

God, we ask You to raise up the future servant leaders to make Living Creek mature and complete. Identify our leaders who will fill positions to serve as staff, interns, leaders of our church and ministries. Help all of us to do our part to take up our cross to serve others the way Jesus modeled for us. In His name we pray, Amen.

Day 36, April 11

Pray for Our Mission

Jesus said, *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation”* (Mark 16:16).

No borders should exist for the message of forgiveness and hope. Your personal mission field might be in a very focused geographic area, your neighborhood, your school, or your workplace.

Yet God calls some to go to specific groups of people with the good news. We call them missionaries. From the beginning, the followers of Christ supported the expansion of the Kingdom of God on earth. At Living Creek, 10% of all funds received in the General Fund go to support missions beyond the south suburbs of Chicago. Please pray for these.

American Border Mission - Renulfo Garza, ministering to Hispanic populations in the U.S.A. and in Mexico.

Campus Christians - Lanny Maddux, ministry focused on international college students in Kansas.

Kuki Mission - Dr. Lunkim leads network of over 500 churches, a seminary, and hospital serving the lowest caste area of India.

Chile Mission - Jack & Janine Swanson serve a church in Santiago and provide residential staff, housing, and future camp for abused and orphaned children.

Oblong Children’s Christian Home - Dave & Kris McCarter house parents, ministering to troubled teens in Illinois.

campus House at Indiana State - Adam & Erin Caldwell serve to provide discipleship, evangelism, service opportunities, and worship for students.

IGNITE - Lance Hurley leads staff and church planters to start new churches in the greater Chicagoland area.

IDES - Rick Jett leads a team who provides international emergency relief in the name of Christ after disasters and tragedy strike.

North American Christian Convention - a non-denominational convention providing preaching, resources, and encouragement to churches and leaders.

ICOM - Dave Empson directs this annual conference which coordinates and networks missionaries around the world. The 2017 ICOM will be held in Peoria, IL.

PRAYER:

Father in Heaven, Help us to preach the word where we live, and bless those who take the message of Christ where we can not go. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 37, April 12

Pray to Reach the 1%

“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?”
(Romans 10:14).

It has been said that the church of Jesus Christ is only one generation away from extinction. If one generation should fail to pass on the good news, it could disappear. Now, God isn't going to let that happen. He will use us to prevent it. We are the agents of His plan. The world is perishing and we know how to stop it. We have the cure for all the ills of the earth - Jesus Christ!

The entire south suburbs of Chicago could be saved if every church in the area would reach just 1% of the population within a 10 mile radius of where their church meets. If Living Creek reached just 1%, which seems to only be scratching the service of the need, we would be a church several times larger than we are today. One (1), is the secret number, not because it is the least we can do, but because it all begins with one person sharing their faith with another, one person at a time.

If we had just read a terrific book, we'd tell all our friends about it. If we had just found a great restaurant, we'd tell all our friends about it. But, we've just found the source of eternal joy and hope, and we keep that information to ourselves. How strange and how sad! Let's not let one person miss out on salvation because we were not willing to point them to Jesus.

PRAYER:

Lord, help us to so live our lives as to glorify You. Help us to show Your love through our actions, to speak Your truth through our words, to show Your path through our steps. Let our lives be a beacon to those around us, an example through which they might come to know You. Father, use Living Creek to reach at least our 1%, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 38, April 13

Pray to Reach and Reflect the Community

“...if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land”
(2 Chronicles 7:14).

Name a meaningful relationship where communication only takes place on Sunday morning, or just before a meal. Marriage? Family? Workplace? Not possible. So, how can we ever expect to have a healthy relationship with God without regular conversations?

Our Lord deeply desires a relationship with us, but He wants us to show up and be a part of it.

Pentecost didn't happen while someone was preaching. It happened during a prayer meeting. When the early church wanted to know the mind of God, there was a time of prayer and fasting.

Jim Cymbala, pastor of the Brooklyn Tabernacle, started a church in a community of people as diverse and different as those in the early church at Pentecost. Like the disciples, he knew his greatest strength laid in prayer.

We need to embrace and pray for the community around us. If we here at Living Creek pray in unity, God will move.

As Pastor Cymbala said: “If we call upon the Lord, he has promised in his Word to answer. If we don't call upon the Lord, he has promised nothing—nothing at all. It's as simple as that.”

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, If ever there was a need for revival it is now. Help us to humble ourselves before You. Forgive us for our lack of passion when it comes to seeking Your presence. Transform us into the men and women You want us to be. Holy Spirit, put God's desires for this community into our hearts so that we can serve Him effectively. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 39, April 14

Pray to be Faithful - Good Friday

“Jesus said, ‘It is finished.’ With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit” (John 19:30).

The darkest day in history was the day Christ hung on the cross. Today is Good Friday. We remember that event with many different responses.

Some may see today with apathy. What difference did the death of Christ make in the world? Others may respond with sadness of the cruelty of man and the ugliness of our sin that marks this day. One response we can't miss is one of thankfulness.

In the garden Jesus prayed that, if possible, God would remove this suffering from Him. But He surrendered to God for His will to be done. Jesus accomplished His mission with faithfulness.

Are you in a place where you are asking God to take some suffering or trial away from you? Ask Him! Sometimes God will deliver and heal immediately. But at other times, His response is that His grace is sufficient for our needs. Through enduring the trial, we find our faith has a new resolve to be faithful. One day we can say like Paul, *“I have fought the good fight.”* Or we can say, *“It is finished,”* like Christ.

Let Jesus be our ultimate example of faithfulness. And not just faithfulness, but also the example of the reward of future glory!

“let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1-2).

PRAYER:

God in Heaven, deliver us from evil. When it is Your will for us to endure trials help us to be faithful like Christ. Thank You for the hope of eternity and the forgiveness of sins we have through His cross. In Christ's name, Amen.

Day 40, April 15

Joy in the Morning!

"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 1:18-19).

Today is Saturday, day 40 of the prayer journal. The day between Good Friday, Christ' death, and Resurrection Sunday. We have the Bible to tell us what happens as we anticipate the greatest miracle of all, Jesus raised from the dead.

If you didn't catch it, read the verse above again. It says that the same power God exerted when He raised Christ from the dead is in us.

Yes, the same power. Imagine the potential in us when we believe in that power. This is the same power Jesus referred to when He told us we could speak to mountains and they would move, if we only had a mustard seed portion of faith.

Now with nothing to fear, we continue to live by faith. Hebrews 11 says, without faith we can not please God! Without it, neither will we tap into the power or the resurrection of Jesus.

Consider the words of the song, "Same Power," by Jeremy Camp.

"Greater is He that is living in me, He's conquered our enemy
No power of darkness, No weapon prevails
We stand here in victory

The same power that rose Jesus from the grave
The same power that commands the dead to wake
Lives in us, lives in us
The same power that moves mountains when He speaks
The same power that can calm a raging sea
Lives in us, lives in us
He lives in us, lives in us"

Prayer:

God in Heaven, thank you for raising Jesus from the dead. We anticipate celebrating this event tomorrow. Help us to tap into the same power that raised Jesus every day of our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 41, April 16

Easter

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer”
(Romans 12:12).

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I am about to spit you out of my mouth” (Revelation 3:15-16).

Okay, so you prayed for 40 days. Now what? Here are your options:

- 1.** You can turn up the heat by praying with greater intensity for our church community, for our nation, missionaries, and the persecuted Christians in the world. Keep a prayer journal and list ways in which you have seen God answer prayers for those around you in powerful ways over time.
- 2.** You can let your prayers grow cold by stopping any regular and systemic way of praying. Only pray when you need God in an emergency!
- 3.** Keep praying, but let the pace and intensity cool off a bit and gradually become lukewarm.

So you get the idea. Hot, cold or something lukewarm in the middle are our options. May God look upon Living Creek as a people who are continually *“faithful in prayer.”*

PRAYER:

Father in heaven, find us faithful. Don't let our love and passion for You grow cold. Our world, our communities, our church, our very families and lives desperately need You. Help us to be faithful in prayer. You are our only hope. Let us see You move as a result of the prayers we have prayed in the last 40 days, and the prayers we will yet pray in the future. In the mighty name of Jesus we pray, Amen.