

Day 6, October 2nd: Turn the Light On

Read Ephesians 1:15-19

"I pray that the eyes of your heart will have enough light to see what is the hope of God's call..." - Ephesians 1:18a

Light-bulb moments. Those times when you have a sudden revelation...an awakening or epiphany that makes you conscious of something you missed before. We've all had them. Sometimes when they occur, they cause us to say to ourselves, "What in the world was I thinking before? Duh!" At other times, the newfound insight spares us from a heap of trouble. Sometimes they set us on an entirely new course in life.

There are some great light-bulb stories across the pages of the Bible—Isaiah's vision of the LORD in the temple, the prodigal son's wake-up call in a pig sty, Saul's encounter with the risen Christ on the road to Damascus, Peter's dream about clean and unclean animals. As it is in these stories, so it continues to be true in our lives: the best light-bulb moments connect us to God's deepest desires for us.

If we are to discover these desires, we will need to spend time in prayer. Ironically, it is when we go into the dark quiet of earnest prayer that the most important light becomes brightest...the light of Christ. This light illumines all things in such a way that we see more clearly than before. As we continue this journey of imagining the future, prayer will be perhaps the most important place where we will discover how we can make it happen. Prayer will turn the light on, so that we can see the hope of God's call.

What do you think is the hope of God's call for you right now? For this campaign? For Memorial?

Day 7, October 3rd: A Strong Foundation

1 Kings 8:28-30

“Constantly watch over this temple, the place about which you said, ‘My name will be there,’ and listen to the prayer that your servant is praying toward this place.”

The people of Israel had waited a long time for this. In fact, the book of 1 Kings tells us that it had been 480 years since the Israelites had escaped bondage in Egypt. Now, finally, King Solomon had completed the construction of the temple where they would worship the LORD their God.

What a grand temple it was. Chapters 6 and 7 give us a vivid description of the place. Then, in chapter 8, we receive an account of the first public event in the temple. At the center of that celebration is the prayer that is our Scripture reading for today. Prayer always undergirds the life of the community of faith

Before the construction began on the Sanctuary building, members from our church gathered for a final prayer walk around the campus. We went into every room and closet praying, singing, and laying our hands on the walls, pews, chairs, and spaces where generations of people have committed their lives to Christ, grown in their discipleship, served others, and put God’s love into action. Throughout the construction, we prayed for the workers who used their talents to repair, rebuild, and restore our Sanctuary building. And now, our prayers turn towards those who will enter into these new spaces that they will encounter the same God who has been present through it all. Prayer always undergirds the life of the community of faith.

How could your participation in this campaign be a witness to your desire for God to “constantly watch over this temple?”

Day 8, October 4th: Get Real

Read Matthew 6:7-13

“When you pray, don’t pour out a flood of empty words...” -Matthew 6:7a

Ever had one of those conversations with someone where you knew immediately the other person was just trying to impress you? What about a time when you knew the only reason someone was talking to you is because they wanted something from you?

Most of us can pretty quickly see through a pile of empty words. Imagine what it must be like for God. When Jesus teaches the disciples how to pray, he first warns them about such behavior. Then he gives them a model...an example that was so good we still use it today in Christian worship. But it’s not the specific words that are so important. Jesus didn’t say, “Pray this...” He said, “Pray like this...”

In the Lord’s Prayer, in less than thirty seconds, we encounter praise, surrender, supplication, and repentance. One thing this model teaches us is that it is not the length or the vocabulary of the prayer that matters, but the humility and authenticity.

So don’t worry about getting the words right. Certainly don’t try to impress God. God knows all about you already. Just talk from the heart and you’ll get it right every time.

Be honest in your prayers regarding this campaign. Where are your struggles? What are your concerns? Do you trust God with the results? Whose will do you desire to be done?

Day 9, October 5th: Praying for Strength

Read Luke 22:39-46

“When he arrived, he said to them, ‘Pray that you won’t give into temptation.’” -Luke 22:40

Jesus knew that it would be difficult for his disciples. He had tried to prepare them for what was about to happen. He had even given them a meal by which to remember him once he was gone...an indication that he would, in fact, soon be gone.

It is remarkable that, while his arrest and crucifixion were fast approaching, Jesus thought first of his disciples and how they would handle their uncertain future. Before going off to pray for himself in the garden, he first encourages them: “Pray that you won’t give into temptation.”

He knew what they would face. Suspicions would be raised about their connections to him. In a frenzy, the crowd might decide to go after them as well as him. In fear, they would be tempted to abandon all that they had learned from him. They would be tempted to deny him. They would be tempted to give up on The Way.

Every day, we are faced with situations that challenge our allegiance. Choices confront us with the decision to follow Jesus or abandon him. Pray that the Spirit of Christ will be at work in you, so that you might not give into temptation, but fulfill all that God has in mind to do through you.

What is the greatest threat/challenge to your full obedience to God’s will for your life?

Day 10, October 6th: A Powerful Thing

Read James 5:13-18

“The prayer of the righteous person is powerful in what it can achieve.” -James 5:16b

Every Tuesday, the Memorial prayer team gathers to lift up the concerns and the celebrations of our church family. This devoted group of servants takes each blue prayer card that has been returned in worship that weekend, adds to them any other prayer requests that have been received, then faithfully offers each one to God.

This team is living out the charge given in the letter of James to pray for those who are suffering, those who are happy, and those who are sick. Contained in their fellowship is a treasure chest of God’s faithfulness. Occasionally, someone will update them on the blue card on their previous request so that they can see the many ways in which God has responded to their prayers. Sometimes the answers have come exactly as imagined. Other times they are surprising, overwhelming, or even perplexing. The journey of prayer doesn’t always end up exactly where we anticipated. One thing is for sure, though: the fact that they prayed mattered...for them and for the ones being prayed for. Prayer is a powerful thing.

Where in your own life have you seen evidence of the power of prayer?

What do you imagine is possible in this campaign if every member of the Memorial family prays diligently?