

## ARBC VISION 2023 – 40 DAYS OF PRAYER

### Week 6

Dear Ashley River Family,

Welcome to our final days of our 40 Days of Prayer! My prayer is that this was a special season for you as we seek God's will for Ashley River. We have so much momentum but we always want to stay in the center of His purpose for us – both corporately and individually!

These final days focus on our prayer life as an expression of hope: *For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.* While this last doxological phrase is not included in most versions of the Bible, it is nevertheless a very appropriate concluding praise to our Father in Heaven. It emphasizes God's ownership over His Kingdom, His power, His glory, and His eternal nature – fully expressed in the final book of our Bible, Revelation: *The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign for ever and ever.*" (Rev. 11:15)

#### **DAY 36 – MAY 31 – THE HOPE OF HEAVEN (JOHN 15:1-17; REVELATION 21:1-8)**

When we look around this fallen world, we see and hear so many incidents that seem so unjust and evil. If we let those things sink deep into our minds, we can easily fall into frustration and even have our faith come down with doubts and questions about the future. As God's children, this is where we are called to deepen our roots in His Word and grow in our faith. As the Word says in John 15:5, abiding in the relationship of Jesus is the key for us to have hope in this world as Jesus has promised that He is "the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End." (Rev. 21:6)

Jesus clearly depicted our need to remain in Him: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (Jn. 15:5) We need to believe that our Lord is in control of everything in our life. Hence, prayer becomes an expression of hope. We can begin by reflecting on how hopeful our congregation is today compared to where we were just one year ago. So, how do we use our personal and corporate prayer time as an expression of hope? In what ways could prayer effectively build believers to become His witnesses in this fallen world?

*Spend time with God in prayer, asking Him to give you a greater desire to study His Word and to see and receive the hopeful promises of our Faithful Father in Heaven.*

#### **DAY 37 – JUNE 1 – TRUST IN HIS GOODNESS (PSALM 19; PSALM 106:1-3; LUKE 18:19)**

We have all experienced difficult moments in life. Sometimes we walk through circumstances that bring adversity. But when we focus too heavily on our problems, we often lose sight of the fact that our God is more powerful than any situation we are experiencing. We cannot deny that the problem

exists, that it troubles us, that it could rob us of our joy and our hope. In our worst moments, we feel that heaven seems so far away. How can we escape these paralyzing thoughts?

Psalm 19 reminds us of the God we serve: the Creator of the heavens and earth, the omnipotent Maker of wonders. He is always good. His love is everlasting. We must proclaim these truths with boldness and gratitude. We must take Scripture at face value and remember that there is no one like Him! Since He is omnipotent, is anything too difficult for Him?

Regardless of your circumstances, declare the greatness of our God! Remember that He deserves to be glorified in all that we do. His Word reassures us that He is always in control of every situation – even those of which we are not aware. And in each of them, His purposes will be fulfilled.

*Spend time with God in prayer, reflecting on His creative power, His sovereignty, and His desire to display His goodness in your life.*

#### **DAY 38 – JUNE 2 – TRUST HIS REDEMPTIVE PLAN (GENESIS 1-3; ROMANS 3:20-26; 2 PETER 3:9)**

God is good and can be trusted. He made a beautiful garden for mankind to live in and rule, blessed them, and then commanded them to be fruitful and increase in number. Sin entered the world through Eve and Adam's choice to break the boundary God established when He told them they must not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or they would die. We see this sinful nature even in two-year-olds who walk directly toward the very thing their parents told them not to touch. I, too, have moments when I willfully disobey what God asks of me. God wanted Adam and Eve to freely choose obedience out of love for Him, but their choice to do their own thing led to separation from Him (Gen.1-3 and Rom.3:23).

But the story does not end there. God would not allow sinful separation to be the final word. He had a redemptive plan for us. God's heart is revealed in 2 Peter 3:9, which reads, "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." God's plan is freely offered and available to all people, and though He knows not all people will receive Him, He will never stop His loving pursuit. Will you trust His redemptive plan for your life today and His Great Commission to "make disciples of all nations"?

*Spend time with God in prayer, meditating on His redemptive plan, thanking Him for saving you, and asking Him to give you opportunities to share the Good News with someone this week.*

#### **DAY 39 – JUNE 3 – EMBRACE HIS URGENCY (MATTHEW 24:14; ROMANS 10:13-15)**

"Therefore, He is able to save completely those who come to God through him..." (Heb. 7:25a). These are powerful words on their own, but the statement continues: "... because He always lives to intercede for them." (Heb. 7:25b)

Yes, Jesus modeled a powerful prayer life while on earth. Jesus taught us how to pray. But here and now, we discover that He, sitting beside Our Father in heaven, is always interceding for us. It stands to reason that He prays more wisely than we do, with more power than we have, with greater insight than we ever could have, and with knowledge of the future that we could only wish to know.

Only the Father knows when He will bring all things to their full and final consummation, but He gives us a marker in Jesus' Olivet Discourse: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." (Mt. 24:14) There is no doubt that our mission is an urgent one, because the heart of God is that all will be given the opportunity to receive Jesus. Ashley River, this is our time to be on mission for God. Let us embrace God's Great Commission with renewed enthusiasm this year so that He may be glorified to the fullest!

*Spend time with God in prayer, committing to Him to take seriously our Gospel mandate – to take the Good News to all the nations, beginning right here in West Ashley.*

#### **DAY 40 – JUNE 4 – HIS KINGDOM COME! (PSALM 145; REVELATION 19:1-9)**

Though we find comfort in knowing that this life is temporary, many of us would confess that the thought of eternity is an overwhelming concept to grasp, just the idea of "forever."

Just think that those who have passed before us are already experiencing "forever," either with Jesus or eternally separated from Him. While dwelling too long on "forever" can be frightening, we may find comfort in knowing that in the "forever" that we will experience, the Lord – our loving, good, kind King – reigns. While whatever peace and goodness we experience here on earth are often overcome by heartache and evil, the goodness, faithfulness, and kindness of God rules over the whole universe forever. There will be no end to His wonderful and mighty dominion. In moments when life is hard, depressing, or heartbreaking, let us remember that our God is on His throne, that His goodness reigns supreme, and that one day we will see it with our own eyes and enjoy it forever.

*Spend time with God in prayer and reflect on your future. Who in your sphere of influence is not a part of our Lord's Kingdom? Ask God to fuel your passion for the lost, even as Jesus came to "seek and to save the lost." Pray also that Ashley River would experience a revival in 2023 like never before!*