
Cedar Springs Mission Devotionals & Prayer Guide

May 2018



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TUESDAY, MAY 1

"I am the rose of Sharon."

Today's Devotional Reading

Song of Solomon 2:1

Whatever there may be of beauty in the material world, Jesus Christ possesses all that in the spiritual world in a tenfold degree. Amongst flowers the rose is deemed the sweetest, but Jesus is infinitely more beautiful in the garden of the soul than the rose can be in the gardens of earth. He takes the first place as the fairest among ten thousand. He is the sun, and all others are the stars; the heavens and the day are dark in comparison with him, *for the King in his beauty transcends all*. "I am the rose of Sharon." This was the best and rarest of roses. Jesus is not "the rose" alone, he is "the rose of Sharon," just as he calls his righteousness "gold," and then adds, "the gold of Ophir" - the best of the best. He is positively lovely, and superlatively the loveliest. *There is variety in his charms*. The rose is delightful to the eye, and its scent is pleasant and refreshing; so each of the senses of the soul, whether it be the taste or feeling, the hearing, the sight, or the spiritual smell, finds appropriate gratification in Jesus. *Even the recollection of his love is sweet*. Take the rose of Sharon, and pull it leaf from leaf, and lay by the leaves in the jar of memory, and you shall find each leaf fragrant long afterwards, filling the house with perfume. Christ *satisfies the highest taste* of the most educated spirit to the very full. The greatest amateur in perfumes is quite satisfied with the rose: and when the soul has arrived at her highest pitch of true taste, she shall still be content with Christ, nay, she shall be the better able to appreciate him. Heaven itself possesses nothing which excels the rose of Sharon. What emblem can fully set forth his beauty? Human speech and earth-born things fail to tell of him. Earth's choicest charms commingled, feebly picture his abounding preciousness. Blessed rose, bloom in my heart forever! - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: Central America

Paul and Dori Pittman currently serve as area directors for United World Mission's Latin America region. Paul is also project coordinator of UWM's Cuba Partnership Project. Pray today for the Pittman family as they enter a season of change preparing for Sam and Sarah to move to the U.S. for college and for Paul and Dori to live there for a year on homestay. They will be arriving in Lake City, Florida this month.

InterVarsity's vision is to see students transformed, campuses renewed, and world changers developed. They live this out by inviting unreached students into life transforming encounters with Jesus Christ and training and developing them as disciples and leaders. Pray today for the staff and volunteers as they complete this semester and makes plans for summer outreach efforts.

Notes:

WEDNESDAY, MAY 2

"These all died in faith."

Today's Devotional Reading

Hebrews 11:13

Behold the epitaph of all those blessed saints who fell asleep before the coming of our Lord! It matters nothing how else they died, whether of old age, or by violent means; this one point, in which they all agree, is the most worthy of record, "they all died in faith." In faith they lived - it was their comfort, their guide, their motive and their support; and in the same spiritual grace they died, ending their life-song in the sweet strain in which they had so long continued. They did not die resting in the flesh or upon their own attainments; they made no advance from their first way of acceptance with God but held to the way of faith to the end. Faith is as precious to die by as to live by. Dying in faith has distinct reference to *the past*. They believed the promises which had gone before and were assured that their sins were blotted out through the mercy of God. Dying in faith has to do with *the present*. These saints were confident of their acceptance with God, they enjoyed the beams of his love, and rested in his faithfulness. Dying in faith looks into *the future*. They fell asleep, affirming that the Messiah would surely come, and that when he would in the last days appear upon the earth, they would rise from their graves to behold him. To them the pains of death were but the birth-pangs of a better state. Take courage, my soul, as thou readest this epitaph. Thy course, through grace, is one of faith, and sight seldom cheers thee; this has also been the pathway of the brightest and the best. Faith was the orbit in which these stars of the first magnitude moved all the time of their shining here; and happy art thou that it is thine. Look anew to-night to Jesus, the author and finisher of thy faith, and thank him for giving thee like precious faith with souls now in glory. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: Central America

Carlos and Sandy Rios are planting Rivers of Grace Bible Church in the San Andres area of Guadalajara, Mexico. The church is growing, and many new families are attending. Pray today for salvation for Alex, Humberto and Mercedes and the growth of new believer Raquel.

Joni and Friends Knoxville ministers to families and individuals affected by disabilities in Knoxville and Tennessee as well as in Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi and in Guatemala. The vision of Joni and Friends is to accelerate Christian ministry in the disability community by communicating the gospel and equipping Christ-honoring churches worldwide to evangelize and disciple people affected by disability. Pray today for the Knoxville staff of Joni and Friends as they prepare for summer outreach efforts.

Notes:

THURSDAY, MAY 3

"A very present help."

Today's Devotional Reading

Psalm 46:1

Covenant blessings are not meant to be looked at only, but to be appropriated. Even our Lord Jesus is given to us for our present use. Believer, thou dost not make use of Christ as thou oughtest to do. When thou art in trouble, why dost thou not tell him all thy grief? Has he not a sympathizing heart, and can he not comfort and relieve thee? No, thou art going about to all thy friends, save thy best Friend, and telling thy tale everywhere except into the bosom of thy Lord. Art thou burdened with this day's sins? Here is a fountain filled with blood: use it, saint, use it. Has a sense of guilt returned upon thee? The pardoning grace of Jesus may be proved again and again. Come to him at once for cleansing. Dost thou deplore thy weakness? He is thy strength: why not lean upon him? Dost thou feel naked? Come hither, soul; put on the robe of Jesus' righteousness. Stand not looking at it but wear it. Strip off thine own righteousness, and thine own fears too: put on the fair white linen, for it was meant to *wear*. Dost thou feel thyself sick? Pull the night-bell of prayer and call up the Beloved Physician! He will give the cordial that will revive thee. Thou art poor, but then thou hast "a kinsman, a mighty man of wealth." What! wilt thou not go to him, and ask him to give thee of his abundance, when he has given thee this promise, that thou shalt be joint heir with him, and has made over all that he is and all that he has to be thine? There is nothing Christ dislikes more than for his people to make a show-thing of him, and not to use him. He loves to be employed by us. The more burdens we put on his shoulders, the more precious will he be to us.

"Let us be simple with him, then,
Not backward, stiff, or cold,
As though our Bethlehem could be
What Sinai was of old."

- Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: Central America

Manuel and Annabella Valverde are involved in church planting and leadership training in Guatemala. Manuel started the Francisco Lacueva Theological Seminary (STFL) in 2012 and they now have 14 students. Pray today for a mission project that Iglesia Bíblica de Guatemala (the Valverde's church) is supporting in a backwoods area in Quiché, Guatemala.

KDEC or Kasr el Dohara Evangelistic Church is the largest evangelical church in the middle east. Started in 1948, it has grown to a membership of 8,000 members. Pray today for the ministry leaders and members of this church as they continue to reach the lost in their city.

Notes.

FRIDAY, MAY 4

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible."

Today's Devotional Reading

1 Peter 1:23

Peter most earnestly exhorted the scattered saints to love each other "with a pure heart fervently" and he wisely fetched his argument, not from the law, from nature, or from philosophy, but from that high and divine nature which God hath implanted in his people. Just as some judicious tutor of princes might labor to beget and foster in them a kingly spirit and dignified behavior, finding arguments in their position and descent, so, looking upon God's people as heirs of glory, princes of the blood royal, descendants of the King of kings, earth's truest and oldest aristocracy, Peter saith to them, "See that ye love one another, because of your noble birth, being born of incorruptible seed; because of your pedigree, being descended from God, the Creator of all things; and because of your immortal destiny, for you shall never pass away, though the glory of the flesh shall fade, and even its existence shall cease." It would be well if, in the spirit of humility, we recognized the true dignity of our regenerated nature, and lived up to it. What is a Christian? If you compare him with a king, he adds priestly sanctity to royal dignity. The king's royalty often lieth only in his crown, but with a Christian it is infused into his inmost nature. He is as much above his fellows through his new birth, as a man is above the beast that perisheth. Surely, he ought to carry himself, in all his dealings, as one who is not of the multitude, but chosen out of the world, distinguished by sovereign grace, written among "the peculiar people" and who therefore cannot grovel in the dust as others, nor live after the manner of the world's citizens. Let the dignity of your nature, and the brightness of your prospects, O believers in Christ, constrain you to cleave unto holiness, and to avoid the very appearance of evil. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: Central America

Kenton and Adriana Wood serve in Guadalajara, Mexico as church planters. Pray today for Kenton who oversees a mother church that has six services on Sunday. Pray also for the Purépecha Indians in the nearby state of Michoacan that they may be reached with the gospel.

The goals of Kentucky Mountain Mission (KMM) and Youth Haven Bible Camp are two-fold: to reach the children and adults of southeastern Kentucky with the gospel of Jesus Christ and to train/disciple those that receive Christ for Christian leadership in their churches and communities. Pray today for God's provision of counselors for this summer.

Notes:

SATURDAY, MAY 5

"He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he."

Today's Devotional Reading

Proverbs 16:20

Wisdom is man's true strength; and, under its guidance, he best accomplishes the ends of his being. Wisely handling the matter of life gives to man the richest enjoyment and presents the noblest occupation for his powers; hence by it he finds good in the fullest sense. Without wisdom, man is as the wild ass's colt, running hither and thither, wasting strength which might be profitably employed. Wisdom is the compass by which man is to steer across the trackless waste of life; without it he is a derelict vessel, the sport of winds and waves. A man must be prudent in such a world as this, or he will find no good, but be betrayed into unnumbered ills. The pilgrim will sorely wound his feet among the briars of the wood of life if he does not pick his steps with the utmost caution. He who is in a wilderness infested with robber bands must handle matters wisely if he would journey safely. If, trained by the Great Teacher, we follow where he leads, we shall find good, even while in this dark abode; there are celestial fruits to be gathered this side of Eden's bowers, and songs of paradise to be sung amid the groves of earth. But where shall this wisdom be found? Many have dreamed of it but have not possessed it. Where shall we learn it? Let us listen to the voice of the Lord, for he hath declared the secret; he hath revealed to the sons of men wherein true wisdom lieth, and we have it in the text, "Whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he." *The true way to handle a matter wisely is to trust in the Lord.* This is the sure clue to the most intricate labyrinths of life, follow it and find eternal bliss. He who trusts in the Lord has a diploma for wisdom granted by inspiration: happy is he now, and happier shall he be above. Lord, in this sweet eventide walk with me in the garden and teach me the wisdom of faith. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: U.S. Based

Steve Hoke works with national church denominations and mission organizations in 25 countries and North America in the area of leader development and strategic life coaching. Pray today for Church Resource Ministries as they recruit young men and women to catalyze Disciplemaking Movements (DMM) in the difficult places of the world (the Middle East, North and West Africa, and Southeast Asia). Pray today for 50 or more new leaders in 2018 and that God will equip the CRM staff with vision and faith to steward them into the right roles of cross-cultural leadership.

Keymedia uses television, radio, the Internet and printed literature as well as local missionaries, in their Arabic and Muslim target countries, for the key purpose of planting churches and discipling local believers to take the gospel to their nation's people. Pray today for the staff of Keymedia that God will protect them and give them the strength they need to accomplish His purpose.

Notes:

SUNDAY, MAY 6

"All the days of my appointed time will I wait."

Today's Devotional Reading

Job 14:14

A little stay on earth will make heaven more heavenly. Nothing makes rest so sweet as toil; nothing renders security so pleasant as exposure to alarms. The bitter quassia cups of earth will give a relish to the new wine which sparkles in the golden bowls of glory. Our battered armor and scarred countenances will render more illustrious our victory above, when we are welcomed to the seats of those who have overcome the world. We should not have full *fellowship with Christ* if we did not for a while sojourn below, for he was baptized with a baptism of suffering among men, and we must be baptized with the same if we would share his kingdom. Fellowship with Christ is so honorable that the sorest sorrow is a light price by which to procure it. Another reason for our lingering here is *for the good of others*. We would not wish to enter heaven till our work is done, and it may be that we are yet ordained to minister light to souls benighted in the wilderness of sin. Our prolonged stay here is doubtless *for God's glory*. A tried saint, like a well-cut diamond, glitters much in the King's crown. Nothing reflects so much honor on a workman as a protracted and severe trial of his work, and its triumphant endurance of the ordeal without giving way in any part. We are God's workmanship, in whom he will be glorified by our afflictions. It is for the honor of Jesus that we endure the trial of our faith with sacred joy. Let each man surrender his own longings to the glory of Jesus, and feel, "If my lying in the dust would elevate my Lord by so much as an inch, let me still lie among the pots of earth. If to live on earth forever would make my Lord more glorious, it should be my heaven to be shut out of heaven." Our time is fixed and settled by eternal decree. Let us not be anxious about it but wait with patience till the gates of pearl shall open. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: Asia

Jeff and Ellen work among unreached people groups in two restricted access countries of Southeast Asia catalyzing Church Planting Movements. Pray today for a new work in Myanmar and the teams that are traveling high into the mountains and encountering challenging conditions to share the gospel with these people.

Knoxville Internationals Network (KIN) began in 2010 when a group of believers involved in ministry among internationals in Knoxville gathered to discuss how they could work together to make a difference in our city. As a result, KIN was born and launched a series of community meetings to raise awareness of the needs among internationals and to give ministries, churches, non-profits and other organizations a forum to connect and share information and resources. Pray today for the various ministries in Knoxville for refugees in the areas of education, health, wellness and employment.

Notes:

MONDAY, MAY 7

"Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk."

Today's Devotional Reading

John 5:8

Like many others, the impotent man had been waiting for a wonder to be wrought, and a sign to be given. Wearily did he watch the pool, but no angel came, or came not for him; yet, thinking it to be his only chance, he waited still, and knew not that there was One near him whose word could heal him in a moment. Many are in the same plight: they are waiting for some singular emotion, remarkable impression, or celestial vision; they wait in vain and watch for nought. Even supposing that, in a few cases, remarkable signs are seen, yet these are rare, and no man has a right to look for them in his own case; no man especially who feels his impotency to avail himself of the moving of the water even if it came. It is a very sad reflection that tens of thousands are now waiting in the use of means, and ordinances, and vows, and resolutions, and have so waited time out of mind, in vain, utterly in vain. Meanwhile these poor souls forget the present Savior, who bids them look unto him and be saved. He could heal them at once, but they prefer to wait for an angel and a wonder. To trust him is the sure way to every blessing, and he is worthy of the most implicit confidence; but unbelief makes them prefer the cold porches of Bethesda to the warm bosom of his love. O that the Lord may turn his eye upon the multitudes who are in this case to-night; may he forgive the slights which they put upon his divine power, and call them by that sweet constraining voice, to rise from the bed of despair, and in the energy of faith take up their bed and walk. O Lord, hear our prayer for all such at this calm hour of sunset, and ere the day breaketh may they look and live.

Courteous reader, is there anything in this portion for you? - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: Asia

Ron and Amy Barber are equipping the next generation of church planters. Their ministry at International Graduate School of Leadership (IGSL) in the Philippines prepares students for ministry in cross-cultural contexts around the world. Pray today for students that Ron is teaching who are from countries where Christians are in the minority and face persecution. Many of them have just returned to their countries after graduating in April.

Knoxville Area Rescue Mission (KARM) provides emergency shelter and food to homeless men and women and offers recovery for those seeking a way out of drug and alcohol abuse. Pray today for KARM's work with the homeless and all the volunteers that assist with this mission. Pray today for KARM and those in the Knoxville homeless community that they will feed, assist and care for during the summer months.

Notes:

TUESDAY, MAY 8

"Acquaint now thyself with him."

Today's Devotional Reading

Job 22:21

If we would rightly "acquaint ourselves with God, and be at peace," we must know him as he has revealed himself, not only in *the unity of his essence and subsistence*, but also in *the plurality of his persons*. God said, "Let us make man in our own image" - let not man be content until he knows something of the "us" from whom his being was derived. Endeavour to know the Father; bury your head in his bosom in deep repentance and confess that you are not worthy to be called his son; receive the kiss of his love; let the ring which is the token of his eternal faithfulness be on your finger; sit at his table and let your heart make merry in his grace. Then press forward and seek to know much of *the Son of God* who is the brightness of his Father's glory, and yet in unspeakable condescension of grace became man for our sakes; know him in the singular complexity of his nature: eternal God, and yet suffering, finite man; follow him as he walks the waters with the tread of deity, and as he sits upon the well in the weariness of humanity. Be not satisfied unless you know much of Jesus Christ as your Friend, your Brother, your Husband, your all. Forget not *the Holy Spirit*; endeavor to obtain a clear view of his nature and character, his attributes, and his works. Behold that Spirit of the Lord, who first of all moved upon chaos, and brought forth order; who now visits the chaos of your soul and creates the order of holiness. Behold him as the Lord and giver of spiritual life, the Illuminator, the Instructor, the Comforter, and the Sanctifier. Behold him as, like holy unction, he descends upon the head of Jesus, and then afterwards rests upon *you* who are as the skirts of his garments. Such an intelligent, scriptural, and experimental belief in the Trinity in Unity is yours if you truly know God; and such knowledge *brings peace indeed*.

- Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: Asia

Lewis and Elsbeth have just moved to Seoul, South Korea to work with exiled high school students. Lewis works to make evangelical literature available to the nations so that people can come to Christ. Pray today for them as they settle into a new country and begin a new work.

Knoxville Christian Arts Ministries (KnoxCAM) is an outreach ministry directed by Dr. Jill Lagerberg. It uses the talents of singers, instrumentalists, dancers and handbell ringers. They minister primarily to prisons and the inner city. They perform up to 10 concerts each year, telling stories of God's unfailing mercy and providence through fully integrated music dramas. Pray today for KnoxCAM as they wrap up their spring performing season that God will continue to touch the hearts of the men and women who watched the gospel story told by these performers.

Notes:

WEDNESDAY, MAY 9

"Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field ... let us see if the vine flourish."

Today's Devotional Reading

Song of Solomon 7:11-12

The church was about to engage in earnest labor and desired her Lord's company in it. She does not say, "I will go," but "let us go." It is blessed working when Jesus is at our side! It is the business of God's people to be trimmers of God's vines. Like our first parents, we are put into the garden of the Lord for usefulness; let us therefore go forth into the field. Observe that the church, when she is in her right mind, in all her many labors desires to enjoy communion with Christ. Some imagine that they cannot serve Christ actively, and yet have fellowship with him: they are mistaken. Doubtless it is very easy to fritter away our inward life in outward exercises, and come to complain with the spouse, "They made me keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept:" but there is no reason why this should be the case except our own folly and neglect. Certain is it that a professor may do nothing, and yet grow quite as lifeless in spiritual things as those who are most busy. Mary was not praised for sitting still; but for her *sitting at Jesus' feet*. Even so, Christians are not to be praised for neglecting duties under the pretense of having secret fellowship with Jesus: it is not sitting but sitting at Jesus' feet which is commendable. Do not think that activity is in itself an evil: it is a great blessing, and a means of grace to us. Paul called it a grace given to him to be allowed to preach; and every form of Christian service may become a personal blessing to those engaged in it. Those who have most fellowship with Christ are not recluses or hermits, who have much time to spare, but indefatigable laborers who are toiling for Jesus, and who, in their toil, have him side by side with them, so that they are workers together with God. Let us remember then, in anything we have to do for Jesus, that we can do it, and should do it in close communion with him. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: Asia

J & F live and work in one of the poorest and most heavily populated states in a country in Asia. They are seeking to make a difference in this state in both physical and spiritual realms. They have been operating a micro-finance business that is creating self-sustaining means of support for churches and church plants as well as continuing to provide funds for the installation of hand pumps to provide clean water to needy areas of the state. Pray today for "AF," a young Muslim man, and the neighborhood that he lives in.

Knoxville Inner City Kids Outreach (KICKO) is a para-church ministry with a mission to "Mobilize the Message of Hope" to the at-risk children in our inner-city neighborhoods. This is done through a unique program called Sidewalk SONday School. Large trucks, outfitted to take the church into these communities, allow them to share the gospel with children at multiple locations each week. Pray today for all the families that KICKO will touch this month.

Notes:

THURSDAY, MAY 10

"The only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Today's Devotional Reading

John 1:14

Believer, you can bear your testimony that Christ is *the only begotten of the Father*, as well as the first begotten from the dead. You can say, "He is divine to me, if he be human to all the world beside. He has done that for me which none but a God could do. He has subdued my stubborn will, melted a heart of adamant, opened gates of brass, and snapped bars of iron. He hath turned for me my mourning into laughter, and my desolation into joy; he hath led my captivity captive, and made my heart rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Let others think as they will of him, to me he must be the only begotten of the Father: blessed be his name. And he is *full of grace*. Ah! had he not been I should never have been saved. He drew me when I struggled to escape from his grace; and when at last I came all trembling like a condemned culprit to his mercy-seat he said, 'Thy sins which are many are all forgiven thee: be of good cheer.' And he is *full of truth*. True have his promises been, not one has failed. I bear witness that never servant had such a master as I have; never brother such a kinsman as he has been to me; never spouse such a husband as Christ has been to my soul; never sinner a better Savior; never mourner a better comforter than Christ hath been to my spirit. I want none beside him. In life he is my life, and in death he shall be the death of death; in poverty Christ is my riches; in sickness he makes my bed; in darkness he is my star, and in brightness he is my sun; he is the manna of the camp in the wilderness, and he shall be the new corn of the host when they come to Canaan. Jesus is to me all grace and no wrath, all truth and no falsehood: and of truth and grace he is *full*, infinitely full. My soul, this night, bless with all thy might 'the only Begotten.'" - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: Asia

Michael and Kim Essenburg are serving at Okinawa Christian School (OCS), a school for missionary children and children of business and professional people in Okinawa, Japan. Pray today for God to provide the opportunity for those baptized at Easter to continue growing in him.

The Knoxville Leadership Foundation or KLF focuses on five important components of community life to ensure overall health within the city: family, youth, housing, racial reconciliation, and economic development. Chris Martin is the founder and president. Pray today for all the KnoxWorx job clubs, including the one that meets at CSPC on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month from 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Notes:

FRIDAY, MAY 11

"Only be thou strong and very courageous."

Today's Devotional Reading

Joshua 1:7

Our God's tender love for his servants makes him concerned for the state of their inward feelings. He desires them to be of good courage. Some esteem it a small thing for a believer to be vexed with doubts and fears, but God thinks not so. From this text it is plain that our Master would not have us entangled with fears. He would have us without carefulness, without doubt, without cowardice. Our Master does not think so lightly of our unbelief as we do. When we are desponding, we are subject to a grievous malady, not to be trifled with, but to be carried at once to the beloved Physician. Our Lord loveth not to see our countenance sad. It was a law of Ahasuerus that no one should come into the king's court dressed in mourning: this is not the law of the King of kings, for we may come mourning as we are; but still he would have us put off the spirit of heaviness, and put on the garment of praise, for there is much reason to rejoice. The Christian man ought to be of a courageous spirit, in order that he may glorify the Lord by enduring trials in a heroic manner. If he be fearful and fainthearted, *it will dishonor his God*. Besides, *what a bad example it is*. This disease of doubtfulness and discouragement is an epidemic which soon spreads amongst the Lord's flock. One downcast believer makes twenty souls sad. Moreover, unless your courage is kept up *Satan will be too much for you*. Let your spirit be joyful in God your Savior, the joy of the Lord shall be your strength, and no fiend of hell shall make headway against you: but cowardice throws down the banner. Moreover, *labor is light* to a man of cheerful spirit; and *success waits upon cheerfulness*. The man who toils, rejoicing in his God, believing with all his heart, has success guaranteed. He who sows in hope shall reap in joy; therefore, dear reader, "be thou strong, and very courageous." - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: Asia

Bruce and Laura Harris have been running SEND International's camp and conference ministry in the mountains of western Tokyo for many years. The HARRISES are returning to church planting and have just returned to Japan from a home assignment. Pray today for the HARRISES to be able to build good relationships with their new neighbors in the western part of Tokyo known as Asakawa. They praise God for providing this new home!

Cedar Springs adopted Lonsdale Elementary in 2003. Lonsdale, with more than 400 students PreK through 5th grade, only serves the Lonsdale area. Over the years, the racial make-up of the school, whose students are 100% free lunch qualified, has changed to primarily Hispanic and African-American children. Pray today for all the children that attend Lonsdale Elementary, their families, and their teachers as they enter the summer months.

Notes.

SATURDAY, MAY 12

"Fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again."

Today's Devotional Reading

Genesis 46:3-4

Jacob must have shuddered at the thought of leaving the land of his father's sojourning and dwelling among heathen strangers. It was *a new scene, and likely to be a trying one*: who shall venture among couriers of a foreign monarch without anxiety? Yet the way was *evidently appointed* for him, and therefore he resolved to go. This is frequently the position of believers now - they are called to perils and temptations altogether untried: at such seasons *let them imitate Jacob's example* by offering sacrifices of prayer unto God and seeking his direction; let them not take a step until they have waited upon the Lord for his blessing: then they *will have Jacob's companion* to be their friend and helper. How blessed to feel assured that the Lord is with us in all our ways and condescends to go down into our humiliations and banishments with us! Even beyond the ocean our Father's love beams like the sun in its strength. We cannot hesitate to go where Jehovah promises his presence; even the valley of death shade grows bright with the radiance of this assurance. Marching onwards with faith in their God, believers *shall have Jacob's promise*. They shall be brought up again, whether it be from the troubles of life or the chambers of death. Jacob's seed came out of Egypt in due time, and so shall all the faithful pass unscathed through the tribulation of life, and the terror of death. Let us *exercise Jacob's confidence*. "Fear not," is the Lord's command and his divine encouragement to those who at his bidding are launching upon new seas; the divine presence and preservation forbid so much as one unbelieving fear. Without our God we should fear to move; but when he bids us to, it would be dangerous to tarry. Reader, go forward, and fear not. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: Asia

Darlene Johnson has been a member of MTW's church-planting team in Nagoya, Japan, since 2000. She teaches conversational English and evangelistic Bible studies and is involved in choral and instrumental music ministry. Pray today for a new church planting sub-team that Darlene is now serving with. The sub-team is with two couples and they are making plans to start a church plant in Eastern Nagoya. Three of the 5 adults on the team are Japanese, and the team's language is Japanese.

The Love Kitchen serves Knoxville's homeless, helpless, hopeless, hungry, and homebound by providing food and clothing. Many CSPC members volunteer there every week preparing and distributing meals. Pray today for all the volunteers who help serve meals from The Love Kitchen each week.

Notes.

SUNDAY, MAY 13

"Thou art my portion, O Lord."

Today's Devotional Reading

Psalm 119:57

Look at thy possessions, O believer, and compare thy portion with the lot of thy fellowmen. Some of them have their portion in the field; they are rich, and their harvests yield them a golden increase; but what are harvests compared with thy God, who is the God of harvests? What are bursting granaries compared with him, who is the Husbandman, and feeds thee with the bread of heaven? Some have their portion in the city; their wealth is abundant, and flows to them in constant streams, until they become a very reservoir of gold; but what is gold compared with thy God? Thou couldst not live on it; thy spiritual life could not be sustained by it. Put it on a troubled conscience, and could it allay its pangs? Apply it to a desponding heart, and see if it could stay a solitary groan, or give one grief the less? But thou hast God, and in him thou hast more than gold or riches ever could buy. Some have their portion in that which most men love - applause and fame; but ask thyself, is not thy God more to thee than that? What if a myriad clarion should be loud in thine applause, would this prepare thee to pass the Jordan, or cheer thee in prospect of judgment? No, there are griefs in life which wealth cannot alleviate; and there is the deep need of a dying hour, for which no riches can provide. But when thou hast *God* for thy portion, thou hast more than all else put together. In him every want is met, whether in life or in death. With God for thy portion thou art rich indeed, for he will supply thy need, comfort thy heart, assuage thy grief, guide thy steps, be with thee in the dark valley, and then take thee home, to enjoy him as thy portion forever. "I have enough," said Esau; this is the best thing a worldly man can say, but Jacob replies, "I have all things," which is a note too high for carnal minds. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: Asia

J and C are working in a Creative Access country for World Outreach. J. is developing an entry platform using sustainable technologies that will provide income and economic development for the people there. Pray today that the fingerlings would continue to grow and be protected from poachers and disease.

Mekong Ministries' vision is to see churches among every Mekong People group that are spiritually healthy and glorifying God, reaching beyond themselves and planting churches in nearby unreached villages and unreached peoples. They seek to facilitate indigenous and Biblical church planting movements among unreached peoples of the Mekong Region. Pray today for new team members to be filled with new insight and understanding and passion in sharing with TL people.

Notes.

MONDAY, MAY 14

"He shall gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom."

Today's Devotional Reading

Isaiah 40:11

Who is he of whom such gracious words are spoken? He is the Good Shepherd. Why doth he carry the lambs in his bosom? Because He hath a tender heart, and any weakness at once melts his heart. The sighs, the ignorance, the feebleness of the little ones of his flock draw forth his compassion. It is his office, as a faithful High Priest, to consider the weak. Besides, he purchased them with blood, they are his property: he must and will care for that which cost him so dear. Then he is responsible for each lamb, bound by covenant engagements not to lose one. Moreover, they are all a part of his glory and reward.

But how may we understand the expression, "He will carry them?" Sometimes he carries them by not permitting them to endure much trial. Providence deals tenderly with them. Often, they are "carried" by being filled with an unusual degree of love, so that they bear up and stand fast. Though their knowledge may not be deep, they have great sweetness in what they do know. Frequently he "carries" them by giving them a very simple faith, which takes the promise just as it stands and believingly runs with every trouble straight to Jesus. The simplicity of their faith gives them an unusual degree of confidence, which carries them above the world.

"He carries the lambs *in his bosom*." Here is *boundless affection*. Would he put them in his bosom if he did not love them much? Here is *tender nearness*: so near are they, that they could not possibly be nearer. Here is *hallowed familiarity*: there are precious love-passages between Christ and his weak ones. Here is *perfect safety*: in his bosom who can hurt them? They must hurt the Shepherd first. Here is *perfect rest and sweetest comfort*. Surely, we are not sufficiently sensible of the infinite tenderness of Jesus! - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: Asia

H and L serve in Asia and are taking on new roles in 2018. H has been asked to be a coordinator for their agency's efforts to facilitate the development of local mission movements within one country in Asia, particularly for reaching the peoples of East Asia. L will be working to connect Asian citizens who have become Christians while studying abroad with local churches in their own countries upon their return. Pray for both of them as they begin these new ministries.

Since 1996, the Mission of Hope has ministered to the people of various counties in Kentucky and Tennessee from which 80% of the residents no longer have jobs in the coal mining industry. From their first campaign helping 150 children in 1996, they helped over 18,000 children and their families this past Christmas season with food, hygiene, new clothing and new toys. Pray today for this ministry's work during the summer.

Notes:

TUESDAY, MAY 15

"Made perfect."

Today's Devotional Reading

Hebrews 12:23

Recollect that there are two kinds of perfection which the Christian needs - the perfection of justification in the person of Jesus, and the perfection of sanctification wrought in him by the Holy Spirit. At present, corruption yet remains even in the breasts of the regenerate - experience soon teaches us this. Within us are still lusts and evil imaginations. But I rejoice to know that the day is coming when God shall finish the work which he has begun; and he shall present my soul, not only perfect in Christ, but perfect through the Spirit, without spot or blemish, or any such thing. Can it be true that this poor sinful heart of mine is to become holy even as God is holy? Can it be that this spirit, which often cries, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this sin and death?" shall get rid of sin and death - that I shall have no evil things to vex my ears, and no unholy thoughts to disturb my peace? Oh, happy hour! may it be hastened! When I cross the Jordan, the work of sanctification will be finished; but not till that moment shall I even claim perfection in myself. Then my spirit shall have its last baptism in the Holy Spirit's fire. Methinks I long to die to receive that last and final purification which shall usher me into heaven. Not an angel more pure than I shall be, for I shall be able to say, in a double sense, "I am clean," through Jesus' blood, and through the Spirit's work. Oh, how should we extol the power of the Holy Ghost in thus making us fit to stand before our Father in heaven! Yet let not the hope of perfection hereafter make us content with imperfection now. If it does this, our hope cannot be genuine; for a good hope is a purifying thing, even now. The work of grace must be *abiding in us now* or it cannot be *perfected then*. Let us pray to "be filled with the Spirit," that we may bring forth *increasingly* the fruits of righteousness. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: Asia

Tezar and Tatiana Putra live in Jakarta, Indonesia where Tezar is the teaching pastor at Covenant City Church. Tezar is an ordained minister under the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) and is a pastor within the Redeemer City to City Church Planting Network. Pray today for the growth of Covenant City Church in Jakarta and for all of the people who will be coming to it in the upcoming days.

The New Anglican Missionary Society or NAMS Network is a global and dispersed community of men and women who have come together to do an apostolic work under an apostolic rule. As missionary servants of the gospel, they carry in their hearts the desire to see the gospel of Jesus Christ reach to the ends of the earth, giving everyone the opportunity to respond to the love of God in Christ Jesus. Pray today for their work in Southeast Asia.

Notes.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 16

"And he said, thus saith the Lord, Make this valley full of ditches. For thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye and your cattle, and your beasts."

Today's Devotional Reading

2 Kings 3:16-17

The armies of the three kings were famishing for want of water: God was about to send it, and in these words the prophet announced the coming blessing. Here was *a case of human helplessness*: not a drop of water could all the valiant men procure from the skies or find in the wells of earth. Thus, often the people of the Lord are at their wits' end; they see the vanity of the creature and learn experimentally where their help is to be found. Still the people were to make *a believing preparation for the divine blessing*; they were to dig the trenches in which the precious liquid would be held. The church must by her varied agencies, efforts, and prayers, make herself ready to be blessed; she must make the pools, and the Lord will fill them. This must be done in faith, in the full assurance that the blessing is about to descend. By-and-by there was *a singular bestowal of the needed boon*. Not as in Elijah's case did the shower pour from the clouds, but in a silent and mysterious manner the pools were filled. The Lord has his own sovereign modes of action: he is not tied to manner and time as we are, but doeth as he pleases among the sons of men. It is ours thankfully to receive from him, and not to dictate to him. We must also notice *the remarkable abundance of the supply* - there was enough for the need of all. And so, it is in the gospel blessing; all the wants of the congregation and of the entire church shall be met by the divine power in answer to prayer; and above all this, victory shall be speedily given to the armies of the Lord.

What am I doing for Jesus? What trenches am I digging? O Lord, make me ready to receive the blessing which thou art so willing to bestow. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: Asia

M is living in Asia working with an unreached people group. She is trusting that God will open doors for the gospel and empower local brothers and sisters to make disciples among them. Pray today for God to provide opportunities to share the gospel with the TL people by helping them with their social issues.

Navigators Collegiate ministry at UT Knoxville has this mission: "To advance the gospel of Jesus and His Kingdom into the nations through spiritual generations of laborers living and discipling among the lost." Pray today for the leaders of this ministry and the students as they prepare for summer outreach efforts.

Notes:

THURSDAY, MAY 17

"Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee."

Today's Devotional Reading

Isaiah 41:09

If we have received the grace of God in our hearts, its practical effect has been to make us God's *servants*. We may be unfaithful servants, we certainly are unprofitable ones, but yet, blessed be his name, we *are* his servants, wearing his livery, feeding at his table, and obeying his commands. We were once the servants of sin, but he who made us free has now taken us into his family and taught us obedience to his will. We do not serve our Master perfectly, but we would if we could. As we hear God's voice saying unto us, "Thou art my servant," we can answer with David, "I am thy servant; thou hast loosed my bonds." But the Lord calls us not only his *servants*, but his *chosen* ones - "I have chosen thee." We have not chosen him first, but he hath chosen us. If we be God's servants, we were not always so; to sovereign grace the change must be ascribed. The eye of sovereignty singled us out, and the voice of unchanging grace declared, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." Long ere time began or space was created God had written upon his heart the names of his elect people, had predestinated them to be conformed unto the image of his Son, and ordained them heirs of all the fulness of his love, his grace, and his glory. What comfort is here! Has the Lord loved us so long, and will he yet cast us away? He knew how stiff necked we should be, he understood that our hearts were evil, and yet he made the choice. Ah! our Savior is no fickle lover. He doth not feel enchanted for a while with some gleams of beauty from his church's eye, and then afterwards cast her off because of her unfaithfulness. Nay, he married her in old eternity; and it is written of Jehovah, "He hateth putting away." The eternal choice is a bond upon *our* gratitude and upon *his* faithfulness which neither can disown. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: Asia

E is part of a team that has translated the New Testament for a large South Asian language group. Beyond this goal of translating the New Testament is the larger goal of seeing the scriptures systematically read and studied by individuals and groups. Pray today for the printing and binding of the New Testament in the MT language and for E as she continues her translation work in another language.

The focus of Navigators International at UT Knoxville is the over 1,000 international students at the University of Tennessee who come from 100+ nations. Spouses and family networks back home multiply the potential for the gospel to spread. Navigator's mission is to advance the gospel of Jesus and His Kingdom to the nations through spiritual generations of laborers living and discipling among the lost. Pray today for the leaders of this ministry and for the international students that are reaching as they prepare for summer outreach efforts.

Notes.

FRIDAY, MAY 18

"Afterward."

Today's Devotional Reading

Hebrews 12:11

How happy are tried Christians, *afterwards*. No calm more deep than that which succeeds a storm. Who has not rejoiced in clear shinings after rain? Victorious banquets are for well-exercised soldiers. After killing the lion we eat the honey; after climbing the Hill Difficulty, we sit down in the arbor to rest; after traversing the Valley of Humiliation, after fighting with Apollyon, the shining one appears, with the healing branch from the tree of life. Our sorrows, like the passing keels of the vessels upon the sea, leave a silver line of holy light behind them "afterwards." It is peace, sweet, deep peace, which follows the horrible turmoil which once reigned in our tormented, guilty souls. See, then, the happy estate of a Christian! He has his best things last, and he therefore in this world receives his worst things first. But even his worst things are "afterward" good things, harsh ploughings yielding joyful harvests. Even now he grows rich by his losses, he rises by his falls, he lives by dying, and becomes full by being emptied; if, then, his grievous afflictions yield him so much peaceable fruit in this life, what shall be the full vintage of joy "afterwards" in heaven? If his dark nights are as bright as the world's days, what shall his days be? If even his starlight is more splendid than the sun, what must his sunlight be? If he can sing in a dungeon, how sweetly will he sing in heaven! If he can praise the Lord in the fires, how will he extol him before the eternal throne! If evil be good to him *now*, what will the overflowing goodness of God be to him *then*? Oh, blessed "afterward!" Who would not be a Christian? Who would not bear the present cross for the crown which cometh afterwards? But herein is work for patience, for the rest is not for to-day, nor the triumph for the present, but "afterward." Wait, O soul, and let patience have her perfect work. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: North Africa Middle East

Isik Abba hosts a satellite TV program called "Light for the Heart" on the Kanal Hayat Turkish-language channel. She also hosts a live call-in program that is simulcast on the Turkish and Farsi channels throughout the Middle East and Europe. These TV programs deliver the message of love, healing, and freedom through Christ Jesus, reflecting on Isik's own life experience. Pray today for a plan to translate her TV programs into the Indonesian language due to the great demand and interest from Indonesian seekers.

PALM (Preparing Arab-World Leaders for Ministry) is Arab World Media's discipleship and theological training ministry. It provides high quality leadership and discipleship training materials in Arabic, Kabyle and French. It is an excellent way to meet the need for training in leadership and ministry among Muslim background believers throughout North Africa, Middle East and Arabian Peninsula. Pray today for the fighting in the Middle East, that it will bring before God the people, who are either fleeing for their lives, or feel trapped and helpless. Ask for the Father's will to be done, and for His angels to hover over the region, protecting the innocent.

Notes:

SATURDAY, MAY 19

"And he requested for himself that he might die."

Today's Devotional Reading

1 Kings 19:4

It was a remarkable thing that the man who was never to die, for whom God had ordained an infinitely better lot, the man who should be carried to heaven in a chariot of fire, and be translated, that he should not see death - should thus pray, "Let me die, I am no better than my fathers." We have here a memorable proof that God does not always answer prayer in kind, though he always does in effect. He gave Elias something better than that which he asked for, and thus really heard and answered him. Strange was it that the lion-hearted Elijah should be so depressed by Jezebel's threat as to ask to die, and blessedly kind was it on the part of our heavenly Father that he did not take his desponding servant at his word. There is a limit to the doctrine of the prayer of faith. We are not to expect that God will give us everything we choose to ask for. We know that we sometimes ask, and do not receive, because we ask amiss. If we ask for that which is not promised - if we run counter to the spirit which the Lord would have us cultivate - if we ask contrary to his will, or to the decrees of his providence - if we ask merely for the gratification of our own ease, and without an eye to his glory, we must not expect that we shall receive. Yet, when we ask in faith, nothing doubting, if we receive not the precise thing asked for, we shall receive an equivalent, and more than an equivalent, for it. As one remarks, "If the Lord does not pay in silver, he will in gold; and if he does not pay in gold, he will in diamonds." If he does not give you precisely what you ask for, he will give you that which is tantamount to it, and that which you will greatly rejoice to receive in lieu thereof. Be then, dear reader, much in prayer, and make this evening a season of earnest intercession, but take heed what you ask. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: North Africa Middle East

We support a family that is serving at a sanatorium for chest diseases, focusing on bringing holistic healing for body and soul to the semi-nomadic people of the area by providing high quality healthcare for them. Our supported worker serves in a mobile dental that was donated to further the outreach and care to Bedouin in remote areas. The clinic is a great resource to meet the felt needs of the poor in places where it is hard or impossible to receive any kind of dental care. Pray today for more in-patients to come to the clinic in the coming months for healing of all sorts.

The Philadelphians Prison Ministry has been ministering in Tennessee prisons for 27+ years. Its purpose is to change the thinking of a prisoner through the power and the knowledge of Jesus Christ. This is done through strong Bible teaching with praise and worship services, weekly in-prison group meetings, the HELP program, and a transitional housing program, the HELP House, in Knoxville. Christian ministry counseling is given to inmate's loved ones, the "silent victims" of crime. Pray today for the volunteers and the inmates that are being reached by this ministry.

Notes.

SUNDAY, MAY 20

"I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love."

Today's Devotional Reading

Hosea 11:4

Our heavenly Father often draws us with the cords of love; but ah! how backward we are to run towards him! How slowly do we respond to his gentle impulses! *He draws us to exercise a more simple faith in him*; but we have not yet attained to Abraham's confidence; we do not leave our worldly cares with God, but, like Martha, we cumber ourselves with much serving. Our meagre faith brings leanness into our souls; we do not open our mouths wide, though God has promised to fill them. Does he not this evening draw us to trust him? Can we not hear him say, "Come, my child, and trust me. The veil is rent; enter into my presence, and approach boldly to the throne of my grace. I am worthy of thy fullest confidence, cast thy cares on me. Shake thyself from the dust of thy cares and put on thy beautiful garments of joy." But, alas! though called with tones of love to the blessed exercise of this comforting grace, we will not come. At another time *he draws us to closer communion with himself*. We have been sitting on the doorstep of God's house, and he bids us advance into the banqueting hall and sup with him, but we decline the honor. There are secret rooms not yet opened to us; Jesus invites us to enter them, but we hold back. Shame on our cold hearts! We are but poor lovers of our sweet Lord Jesus, not fit to be his servants, much less to be his brides, and yet he hath exalted us to be bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, married to him by a glorious marriage-covenant. Herein is love! But it is love which *takes no denial*. If we obey not the gentle drawings of his love, he will send affliction to drive us into closer intimacy with himself. Have us nearer he will. What foolish children we are to refuse those bands of love, and so bring upon our backs that scourge of small cords, which Jesus knows how to use! - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: North Africa Middle East

T works with the SEED Company (an affiliate organization of Wycliffe Bible Translators) in their mission to promote and accelerate Bible translation by indigenous churches and organizations in their home countries. T watches over 12 translation projects that represent 35 languages, many of which are just receiving the first Scripture in their own language. Pray today that all of the translation teams will be protected from anti-Christian groups in the areas where they are working.

Reformed Bible Seminary Myanmar was begun by Dr. Tial Thanga and the Myanmar Reformed Theological Presbyterian Church. Carroll and Shirley Coakley serve as Associate Staff with Worldwide Development Association's International Team and work closely with Dr. Thanga. Pray today for Dr. Thanga's work in Myanmar.

Notes.

MONDAY, MAY 21

"There is corn in Egypt."

Today's Devotional Reading

Genesis 42:2

Famine pinched all the nations, and it seemed inevitable that Jacob and his family should suffer great want; but the God of providence, who never forgets the objects of electing love, had stored a granary for his people by giving the Egyptians warning of the scarcity, and leading them to treasure up the grain of the years of plenty. Little did Jacob expect deliverance from Egypt, but there was the corn in store for him. Believer, though all things are apparently against thee, rest assured that God has made a reservation on thy behalf; in the roll of thy griefs there is a saving clause. Somehow, he will deliver thee, and somewhere he will provide for thee. The quarter from which thy rescue shall arise may be a very unexpected one, but help will assuredly come in thine extremity, and thou shalt magnify the name of the Lord. If men do not feed thee, ravens shall; and if earth yield not wheat, heaven shall drop with manna. Therefore, be of good courage, and rest quietly in the Lord. God can make the sun rise in the west if he pleases and make the source of distress the channel of delight. The corn in Egypt was all in the hands of the beloved Joseph; he opened or closed the granaries at will. And so, the riches of providence are all in the absolute power of our Lord Jesus, who will dispense them liberally to his people. Joseph was abundantly ready to succor his own family; and Jesus is unceasing in his faithful care for his brethren. Our business is to go after the help which is provided for us: we must not sit still in despondency but bestir ourselves. Prayer will bear us soon into the presence of our royal Brother: once before his throne we have only to ask and have: his stores are not exhausted; there is corn still: his heart is not hard, he will give the corn to us. Lord, forgive our unbelief, and this evening constrain us to draw largely from thy fulness and receive grace for grace. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: North Africa Middle East

Hugo and Jackie are from South Africa and have two children, Marlena and John. Hugo is one of the leaders of a media ministry and has also been providing oversight to the PALM ministry (Preparing Arab World Leaders for Ministry) for the last few years. Pray today for church planting efforts in the Sudan and the challenges the leaders are facing.

As a ministry of the Presbyterian Church in America, RUF holds to the core beliefs of historic Christianity which motivate a heart for God and love for the university. CSPC supports RUF on two college campuses - UT Knoxville and Carson Newman. Pray today for the staff of RUF as they prepare for summer outreach efforts.

Notes:

TUESDAY, MAY 22

"Behold, thou art fair, my Beloved."

Today's Devotional Reading

Song of Solomon 1:16

From every point our Well-beloved is most fair. Our various experiences are meant by our heavenly Father to furnish fresh standpoints from which we may view the loveliness of Jesus; how amiable are our trials when they carry us aloft where we may gain clearer views of Jesus than ordinary life could afford us! We have seen him from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, and he has shone upon us as the sun in his strength; but we have seen him also "from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards," and he has lost none of his loveliness. From the languishing of a sick bed, from the borders of the grave, have we turned our eyes to our soul's spouse, and he has never been otherwise than "all fair." Many of his saints have looked upon him from the gloom of dungeons, and from the red flames of the stake, yet have they never uttered an ill word of him but have died extolling his surpassing charms. Oh, noble and pleasant employment to be forever gazing at our sweet Lord Jesus! Is it not unspeakably delightful to view the Savior in all his offices, and to perceive him matchless in each? - to shift the kaleidoscope, as it were, and to find fresh combinations of peerless graces? In the manger and in eternity, on the cross and on his throne, in the garden and in his kingdom, among thieves or in the midst of cherubim, he is everywhere "altogether lovely." Examine carefully every little act of his life, and every trait of his character, and he is as lovely in the minute as in the majestic. Judge him as you will, you cannot censure; weigh him as you please, and he will not be found wanting. Eternity shall not discover the shadow of a spot in our Beloved, but rather, as ages revolve, his hidden glories shall shine forth with yet more inconceivable splendor, and his unutterable loveliness shall more and more ravish all celestial minds. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: North Africa Middle East

Mike and Stephanie are working with a project called LEARN (Leadership Education and Resource Network) based in Beirut, Lebanon. The project's aim is to provide high quality, interactive Biblical training via Internet to Arabic-speakers wherever they are found. Pray today for Mike who is teaching two classes this Spring on the interaction of Muslims and Christians in this region. Please pray for the Spirit's anointing on these teaching opportunities.

Safe Families for Children is an innovative collaboration between area churches, volunteers and child care professionals designed to support at-risk children and parents in need. Pray today for Janet Cockrum and her leadership for this ministry. For more information, contact Janet at jcockrum@bethany.org.

Notes:

WEDNESDAY, MAY 23

"Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money."

Today's Devotional Reading

Isaiah 43:24

Worshippers at the temple were wont to bring presents of sweet perfumes to be burned upon the altar of God: but Israel, in the time of her backsliding, became ungenerous, and made but few votive offerings to her Lord: this was an evidence of coldness of heart towards God and his house. Reader, does this never occur with you? Might not the complaint of the text be occasionally, if not frequently, brought against you? Those who are poor in pocket, if rich in faith, will be accepted none the less because their gifts are small; but, poor reader, do you give in fair proportion to the Lord, or is the widow's mite kept back from the sacred treasury? The rich believer should be thankful for the talent entrusted to him, but should not forget his large responsibility, for where much is given much will be required; but, rich reader, are you mindful of your obligations, and rendering to the Lord according to the benefit received? Jesus gave his blood for us, what shall we give to him? We are his, and all that we have, for he has purchased us unto himself - can we act as if we were our own? O for more consecration! and to this end, O for more love! Blessed Jesus, how good it is of thee to accept our sweet cane bought with money! nothing is too costly as a tribute to thine unrivalled love, and yet thou dost receive with favor the smallest sincere token of affection! Thou dost receive our poor forget-me-nots and love-tokens as though they were intrinsically precious, though indeed they are but as the bunch of wild flowers which the child brings to its mother. Never may we grow miserly towards thee, and from this hour never may we hear thee complain of us again for withholding the gifts of our love. We will give thee the first fruits of our increase, and pay thee tithes of all, and then we will confess "of thine own have we given thee." - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: North Africa Middle East

Josh and Jenny M. are working with the RAK Church Plant in the United Arab Emirates. The RAK Evangelical Church has now been formally constituted as a church with about 40 members. The Manleys have recently celebrated living in UAE for 5 years. Pray today for the many people attending the English for Non-Native Speakers classes on Friday mornings.

Samaritan Ministry is a faith-based AIDS Service Organization led by Wayne Smith at Central Baptist Church of Bearden in Knoxville. They seek to serve people, primarily in East Tennessee, who are living with HIV/AIDS through direct support and by way of their significant network of service providers. Pray today for the staff of this ministry and the people they are serving.

Notes.

THURSDAY, MAY 24

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ."

Today's Devotional Reading

Philippians 1:27

The word "conversation" does not merely mean our talk and converse with one another, but the whole course of our life and behavior in the world. The Greek word signifies the actions and the privileges of citizenship: and thus we are commanded to let our actions, as citizens of the New Jerusalem, be such as becometh the gospel of Christ. What sort of conversation is this? In the first place, *the gospel is very simple*. So, Christians should be simple and plain in their habits. There should be about our manner, our speech, our dress, our whole behavior, that simplicity which is the very soul of beauty. The gospel is *pre-eminently true*, it is gold without dross; and the Christian's life will be lusterless and valueless without the jewel of truth. The gospel is a *very fearless gospel*, it boldly proclaims the truth, whether men like it or not: we must be equally faithful and unflinching. But the gospel is also *very gentle*. Mark this spirit in its Founder: "a bruised reed he will not break." Some professors are sharper than a thorn-hedge; such men are not like Jesus. Let us seek to win others by the gentleness of our words and acts. The gospel is *very loving*. It is the message of the God of love to a lost and fallen race. Christ's last command to his disciples was, "Love one another." O for more real, hearty union and love to all the saints; for more tender compassion towards the souls of the worst and vilest of men! We must not forget that the gospel of Christ is *holy*. It never excuses sin: it pardons it, but only through an atonement. If our life is to resemble the gospel, we must shun, not merely the grosser vices, but everything that would hinder our perfect conformity to Christ. For his sake, for our own sakes, and for the sakes of others, we must strive day by day to let our conversation be more in accordance with his gospel. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: North Africa Middle East

F & S are working alongside Arab believers toward the goal of seeing churches planted for those who do not have a church. Their focus is to mobilize, resource and train nationals for this purpose. Pray today for a little boy in the preschool where S serves that recently lost his eye in an accident with acid from a cleaning product.

The Cross Greek Christian Ministry is unique to the University of Tennessee and focuses on the fraternity and sorority community. The ministry is student led, but guided by a staff. Pray today for the staff and student leaders with The Cross that they might continue to reach students who need to find a caring community.

Notes.

FRIDAY, MAY 25

"And they rose up the same hour and returned to Jerusalem ... and they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them."

Today's Devotional Reading

Luke 24:34-35

When the two disciples had reached Emmaus, and were refreshing themselves at the evening meal, the mysterious stranger who had so enchanted them upon the road, took bread and brake it, made himself known to them, and then vanished out of their sight. They had constrained him to abide with them, because the day was far spent; but now, although it was much later, their love was a lamp to their feet, yea, wings also; they forgot the darkness, their weariness was all gone, and forthwith they journeyed back the threescore furlongs to tell the gladsome news of a risen Lord, who had appeared to them by the way. They reached the Christians in Jerusalem and were received by a burst of joyful news before they could tell their own tale. These early Christians were all on fire to speak of Christ's resurrection, and to proclaim what they knew of the Lord; they made common property of their experiences. This evening let their example impress us deeply. We too must bear our witness concerning Jesus. John's account of the sepulcher needed to be supplemented by Peter; and Mary could speak of something further still; combined, we have a full testimony from which nothing can be spared. We have each of us peculiar gifts and special manifestations; but the one object God has in view is the perfecting of the whole body of Christ. We must, therefore, bring our spiritual possessions and lay them at the apostle's feet, and make distribution unto all of what God has given to us. Keep back no part of the precious truth, but speak what you know, and testify what you have seen. Let not the toil or darkness, or possible unbelief of your friends, weigh one moment in the scale. Up, and be marching to the place of duty, and there tell what great things God has shown to your soul. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: North Africa & Middle East

Brian and Joanne Parks are church planters in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Brian is the Senior Pastor of Covenant Hope Church in Dubai. They moved with their family to Dubai fifteen years ago to pioneer a student ministry there. Pray today for people attending their church who are not yet Christians. May their eyes, ears, and hearts be open to the gospel.

The Restoration House (TRH) is working to help restore single mothers and their children back to God's good intent for their lives. Through transformational housing, team mentoring, and service planning, TRH is helping single mother families end cycles of poverty and distress. Pray today for the expansion plans for TRH in 2018 that will triple the number of single families they are helping!

Notes.

SATURDAY, MAY 26

"Continue it the faith."

Today's Devotional Reading

Acts 14:22

Perseverance is the badge of true saints. The Christian life is not a *beginning* only in the ways of God, but also a *continuance* in the same as long as life lasts. It is with a Christian as it was with the great Napoleon: he said, "Conquest has made me what I am, and conquest must maintain me." So, under God, dear brother in the Lord, conquest has made you what you are, and conquest must sustain you. Your motto must be, "Excelsior." He only is a true conqueror, and shall be crowned at the last, who continueth till war's trumpet is blown no more. Perseverance is, therefore, the target of all our spiritual enemies. The *world* does not object to your being a Christian for a time, if she can but tempt you to cease your pilgrimage and settle down to buy and sell with her in Vanity Fair. The *flesh* will seek to ensnare you, and to prevent your pressing on to glory. "It is weary work being a pilgrim; come, give it up. Am I always to be mortified? Am I never to be indulged? Give me at least a furlough from this constant warfare." *Satan* will make many a fierce attack on your perseverance; it will be the mark for all his arrows. He will strive to hinder you *in service*: he will insinuate that you are doing no good; and that you want rest. He will endeavor to make you weary of *suffering*, he will whisper, "Curse God, and die." Or he will attack your *steadfastness*: "What is the good of being so zealous? Be quiet like the rest; sleep as do others, and let your lamp go out as the other virgins do." Or he will assail your *doctrinal sentiments*: "Why do you hold to these denominational creeds? Sensible men are getting more liberal; they are removing the old landmarks: fall in with the times." Wear your shield, Christian, therefore, close upon your armor, and cry mightily unto God, that by his Spirit you may endure to the end. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Partner Focus: North Africa & Middle East

We are providing prayer support for two families living in Creative Access countries who are "Tent Makers." Their work gives them access to the local population. Pray today for wisdom and safety for these two growing families.

The Thornston Educational Fund is an organization whose mission is to initiate and develop relationships with certain educational institutions that serve the needs of underprivileged individuals and families in Asia. Pray today for the organization's work and for the people who are served.

Notes.

SUNDAY, MAY 27

"What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?"

Today's Devotional Reading

2 Samuel 9:8

If Mephibosheth was thus humbled by David's kindness, what shall *we* be in the presence of our gracious Lord? The more grace we have, the less we shall think of ourselves, for grace, like light, reveals our impurity. Eminent saints have scarcely known to what to compare themselves, their sense of unworthiness has been so clear and keen. "I am," says holy Rutherford, "a dry and withered branch, a piece of dead carcass, dry bones, and not able to step over a straw." In another place he writes, "Except as to open outbreakings, I want nothing of what Judas and Cain had." The meanest objects in nature appear to the humbled mind to have a preference above itself, because they have never contracted sin: a dog may be greedy, fierce, or filthy, but it has no conscience to violate, no Holy Spirit to resist. A dog may be a worthless animal, and yet by a little kindness it is soon won to love its master and is faithful unto death; but we forget the goodness of the Lord and follow not at his call. The term "dead dog" is the most expressive of all terms of contempt, but it is none too strong to express the self- abhorrence of instructed believers. They do not affect mock modesty, they mean what they say, they have weighed themselves in the balances of the sanctuary and found out the vanity of their nature. At best, we are but clay, animated dust, mere walking hillocks; but viewed as sinners, we are monsters indeed. Let it be published in heaven as a wonder, that the Lord Jesus should set his heart's love upon such as we are. Dust and ashes though we be, we must and will "magnify the exceeding greatness of his grace." Could not his heart find rest in heaven? Must he needs come to these tents of Kedar for a spouse, and choose a bride upon whom the sun had looked? O heavens and earth, break forth into a song, and give all glory to our sweet Lord Jesus. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Focus: Africa

Sybil Baloyi lives in Mozambique and runs a preschool for orphaned and vulnerable children. Pray today for new teachers in the school that they may adjust quickly and enjoy being part of the team.

Thrive Lonsdale is led by CSPPC member Clayton Wood. This organization challenges inner-city youth with the love of Jesus Christ to serve others and reconcile by creatively meeting their spiritual, educational, and recreational needs through Bible study, tutoring, mentoring and outings. Pray today for the Thrive team of volunteers and staff as they prepare for the summer.

Notes:

MONDAY, MAY 28

"This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope."

Today's Devotional Reading

Lamentations 3:21

Memory is frequently the bond slave of despondency. Despairing minds call to remembrance every dark foreboding in the past and dilate upon every gloomy feature in the present; thus memory, clothed in sackcloth, presents to the mind a cup of mingled gall and wormwood. There is, however, no necessity for this. Wisdom can readily transform memory into an angel of comfort. That same recollection which in its left hand brings so many gloomy omens, may be trained to bear in its right a wealth of hopeful signs. She need not wear a crown of iron, she may encircle her brow with a fillet of gold, all spangled with stars. Thus, it was in Jeremiah's experience: in the previous verse memory had brought him to deep humiliation of soul: "My soul hath them still in remembrance and is humbled in me;" and now this same memory restored him to life and comfort. "This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope." Like a two-edged sword, his memory first killed his pride with one edge, and then slew his despair with the other. As a general principle, if we would exercise our memories more wisely, we might, in our very darkest distress, strike a match which would instantaneously kindle the lamp of comfort. There is no need for God to create a new thing upon the earth in order to restore believers to joy; if they would prayerfully rake the ashes of the past, they would find light for the present; and if they would turn to the book of truth and the throne of grace, their candle would soon shine as aforetime. Be it ours to remember the lovingkindness of the Lord, and to rehearse his deeds of grace. Let us open the volume of recollection which is so richly illuminated with memorials of mercy, and we shall soon be happy. Thus, memory may be, as Coleridge calls it, "the bosom-spring of joy," and when the Divine Comforter bends it to his service, it may be chief among earthly comforters. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Focus: Africa

Mark and Annemarie Dye are passionate about building Christian leaders to mobilize and equip the African Church for mission in the world. Pray today for a new couple who arrived this spring in Uganda, that they may adapt quickly their new home and culture.

Volta a Biblia is a Bible Training College equipping church leaders in Macia, Mozambique. Pray today for the faculty of the college as they prepare and teach the students.

Notes.

TUESDAY, MAY 29

"Thou hatest wickedness."

Today's Devotional Reading

Psalm 45:7

"Be ye angry, and sin not." There can hardly be goodness in a man if he be not angry at sin; he who loves truth must hate every false way. How our Lord Jesus hated it when the temptation came! Thrice it assailed him in different forms, but ever he met it with, "Get thee behind me, Satan." He hated it in others; none the less fervently because he showed his hate oftener in tears of pity than in words of rebuke; yet what language could be more stern, more Elijah-like, than the words, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer." He hated wickedness, so much that he bled to wound it to the heart; he died that it might die; he was buried that he might bury it in his tomb; and he rose that he might for ever trample it beneath his feet. Christ is in the Gospel, and that Gospel is opposed to wickedness in every shape. Wickedness arrays itself in fair garments, and imitates the language of holiness; but the precepts of Jesus, like his famous scourge of small cords, chase it out of the temple, and will not tolerate it in the Church. So, too, in the heart where Jesus reigns, what war there is between Christ and Belial! And when our Redeemer shall come to be our Judge, those thundering words, "Depart, ye cursed" which are, indeed, but a prolongation of his life-teaching concerning sin, shall manifest his abhorrence of iniquity. As warm as is his love to sinners, so hot is his hatred of sin; as perfect as is his righteousness, so complete shall be the destruction of every form of wickedness. O thou glorious champion of right, and destroyer of wrong, for this cause hath God, even thy God, anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Focus: Africa

Bill Harding is currently a special representative for SIM in North America. God is using Bill's gifts and rich experience in Ethiopia as a conference speaker to challenge and reaffirm the priority of world missions. Pray today for their son, Drew, and his family in Stellenbosch, South Africa as they explore possibilities and opportunities to establish a coffee lodge in Yirgacheffe, Ethiopia.

Wears Valley Ranch offers a Christian home, education, and counseling to children from families in crisis. Their vision is to see each child inspired to follow Christ, healed from the past, and equipped to reach their full potential. Pray today for the staff of WVR as they model Christ's love and salvation to the residents and for young adults to become mentors.

Notes.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 30

"That henceforth we should not serve sin."

Today's Devotional Reading

Romans 6:6

Christian, what hast thou to do with sin? *Hath it not cost thee enough already?* Burnt child, wilt thou play with the fire? What! when thou hast already been between the jaws of the lion, wilt thou step a second time into his den? Hast thou not had enough of the old serpent? Did he not poison all thy veins once, and wilt thou play upon the hole of the asp, and put thy hand upon the cockatrice's den a second time? Oh, be not so mad! so foolish! Did sin ever yield thee real pleasure? Didst thou find solid satisfaction in it? If so, go back to thine old drudgery, and wear the chain again, if it delight thee. But inasmuch as sin did never give thee what it promised to bestow, but deluded thee with lies, be not a second time snared by the old fowler - be free and let the remembrance of thy ancient bondage forbid thee to enter the net again! *It is contrary to the designs of eternal love*, which all have an eye to thy purity and holiness; therefore, run not counter to the purposes of thy Lord. Another thought should restrain thee from sin. *Christians can never sin cheaply*; they pay a heavy price for iniquity. Transgression destroys peace of mind, obscures fellowship with Jesus, hinders prayer, brings darkness over the soul; therefore, be not the serf and bondman of sin. There is yet a higher argument: each time you "serve sin" you have "*Crucified the Lord afresh and put him to an open shame.*" Can you bear that thought? Oh! if you have fallen into any special sin during this day, it may be my Master has sent this admonition this evening, to bring you back before you have backslidden very far. Turn thee to Jesus anew; he has not forgotten his love to thee; his grace is still the same. With weeping and repentance, come thou to his footstool, and thou shalt be once more received into his heart; thou shalt be set upon a rock again, and thy goings shall be established. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Focus: Africa

Tim and Barbie K. are working to translate the Bible into the Makori language, currently working in Acts and Galatians. Barbie is also guest house manager and Regional Director, having responsibility for more than 20 missionaries in the area. Their main goal is to see a Makori church effectively using its own Bible translation. Pray today for Tim and Barbie who are in the U.S. on home assignment until late summer 2018. Pray for them as they seek to communicate well what God is doing through their translation work in Africa.

World Mission Centre was established in 1989 in to awake a deeper understanding of world evangelization and to mobilize Christians at a local church level to heed the call of the Great Commission. The Live School seeks to train thousands of workers to join worldwide efforts to reach the unreached. Pray today for the World Mission Centre team and all who are receiving training through the Live School.

Notes.

THURSDAY, MAY 31

"Who healeth all thy diseases."

Today's Devotional Reading

Psalm 103:3

Humbling as is the statement, yet the fact is certain, that we are all more or less suffering under the disease of sin. What a comfort to know that we have a great Physician who is both able and willing to heal us! Let us think of him awhile to-night. His cures are very *speedy* - there is life in a look at him; his cures are *radical* - he strikes at the center of the disease; and hence, his cures are sure and certain. He never fails, and *the disease never returns*. There is no relapse where Christ heals; no fear that his patients should be merely patched up for a season, he makes new men of them: a new heart also does he give them, and a right spirit does he put with them. He is well skilled in *all* diseases. Physicians generally have some *specialty*. Although they may know a little about almost all our pains and ills, there is usually one disease which they have studied above all others; but Jesus Christ is thoroughly acquainted with the whole of human nature. He is as much at home with one sinner as with another, and never yet did he meet with an out-of-the-way case that was difficult to him. He has had extraordinary complications of strange diseases to deal with, but he has known exactly with one glance of his eye how to treat the patient. He is the only universal doctor; and the medicine he gives is the only true catholicon, healing in every instance. Whatever our spiritual malady may be, we should apply at once to this Divine Physician. There is no brokenness of heart which Jesus cannot bind up. "His blood cleanseth from all sin." We have but to think of the myriads who have been delivered from all sorts of diseases through the power and virtue of his touch, and we shall joyfully put ourselves in his hands. We trust him, and sin dies; we love him, and grace lives; we wait for him and grace is strengthened; we see him as he is, and grace is perfected forever. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Morning & Evening - Daily Readings*

Prayer for the church, for others, for myself

Global Focus: Africa

Heath and Angela Many have been serving at Tenwek Hospital, a Christian mission hospital in rural Kenya, as medical missionaries in their respective fields (surgery and obstetrics/gynecology). Pray today that God will lead Kenyan physicians to Tenwek who share a vision of showing the love of Christ through providing quality care to the poor and needy, while training up the next generation of national doctors.

World Gospel Mission partners with individuals and churches worldwide to make disciples of Christ and encourage believers to become missions-active through ministries that reach the whole person - physically and spiritually - transforming communities. Pray today for all the missionaries deployed by this organization.

Notes:

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