

April 14, 2020

Dear Valley Church Family,

We passed 100 remarkable minutes last Wednesday night at our Joel Moment Prayer Gathering. The planned part with “*psalms, and hymns and spiritual songs*” was rich (Col. 3:16); the small group prayer time was more valuable as we heard prayers from even the very young; however, the last part was the worthiest, as we went “off script” and let the Holy Spirit lead the way. Many of our brothers and sisters shared how God had been challenging their selfishness and calling them to greater singleness of heart.

This Wednesday, let’s not let up. As Pastor Kurt urged us in his weekly, “we’re not through this yet...” So, let’s focus like King Jehoshaphat did when he and the nation of Judah were invaded by a enemy nation.

ESV 2 Chronicles 20:3-4 Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. ⁴ And Judah assembled to seek help from the LORD; from all the cities...

Here’s another thought about going without food so we can pay serious attention to God.

Being Burdened for Others Can Lead Us to Fast.

ESV Psalm 35:13 But I, when they were sick--I wore sackcloth; I afflicted myself with fasting; I prayed with head bowed on my chest.

Two friends shared with me last week how bowed down they feel about loved ones and friends who are passing their brief earthly lives far away from God. One person wrote:

“...In personally consulting with God, I realize I have many in my extended family and friends circle who have “forsaken” the Saviour they once worshiped...I feel more strongly motivated to pray for them specifically.....that they will listen and respond to the Spirit's invitation to “Return to Me”...I praise Him for restoring [my brother’s] faith, a hundred fold...I’m so very grateful...”

Over the last two weeks, we’ve humbled ourselves to thaw any spiritual chilliness in our own interiors, so that we can burn hot once again. Let’s continue in that way, but also “*cry out to the LORD*” (Joel 1:14) for those who have walked away from the light, or for those who have only known chains and darkness.

Here’s a last point: going without food is physically uncomfortable. One person wrote this to me: “As I sit here working I keep getting impulses to go get something to eat, then remember that I’m fasting.” We might even get grumpy, feel “unspiritual,” and think, “Why am I doing this?” That’s normal. Let’s stay in this place of sacrifice, waiting for God to fill us with Scriptures and songs in the pages that follow.

Because we live on his “*every word*” (Matt. 4:4)

The Valley Church Leaders



PRAYER GUIDE "RETURN TO ME"

Mourning Disciples

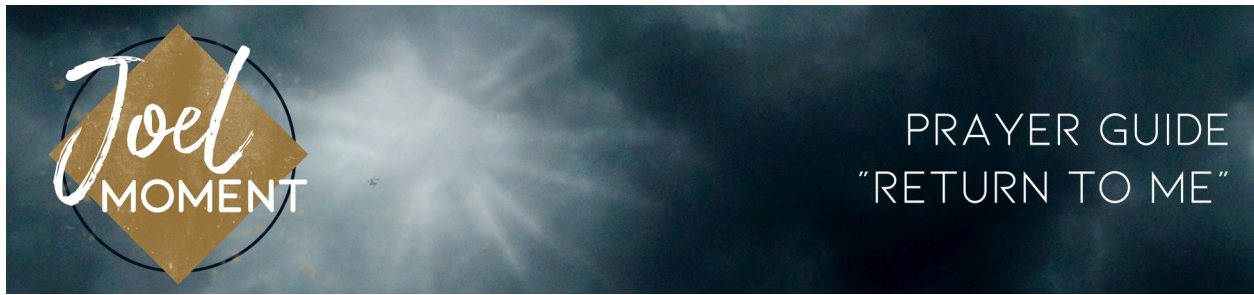
As I've worked from home the last few weeks, I've enjoyed spying on these two mourning doves huddled outside my window. You know the sound they make — ooOoo-woo-woo-woooo. We're taking our cue from these birds, and ooOoo-woo-woo-woooo-ing for our shortcomings, as well for those of our nation and world (Joel 2:12). This intense sorrow is just for the time being, because God can't help but give his children "gladness for sorrow" (Jer. 31:13).



Making the Most of the Day: April 15, 2020

Between 6:00 AM—9:00 AM: Open your Bible to Psalm 55, a fitting Psalm for a troubled "dove" spending a day in lowliness and seeking (v.17). The threat here isn't disease, but evil-doers and a double-crossing friend. Sink into the Psalm by reading it at half your normal speed. If God gives you an insight, record it on the line below and share it this afternoon at the Joel Moment Prayer Gathering.

ESV **Psalm 55** *To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Maskil of David. Give ear to my prayer, O God, and hide not yourself from my plea for mercy!* ² *Attend to me, and answer me; I am restless in my complaint and I moan,* ³ *because of the noise of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked. For they drop trouble upon me, and in anger they bear a grudge against me.* ⁴ *My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death have fallen upon me.* ⁵ *Fear and trembling come upon me, and horror overwhelms me.* ⁶ *And I say, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest;* ⁷ *yes, I would wander far away; I would lodge in the wilderness; Selah* ⁸ *I would hurry to find a shelter from the raging wind and tempest."* ⁹ *Destroy, O Lord, divide their tongues; for I see violence and strife in the city.* ¹⁰ *Day and night they go around it on its walls, and iniquity and trouble are within it;* ¹¹ *ruin is in its midst; oppression and fraud do not depart from its marketplace.* ¹² *For it is not an enemy who taunts me--then I could bear it; it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me--then I could hide from him.* ¹³ *But it is you, a man, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend.* ¹⁴ *We used to take sweet counsel together; within God's house we walked in the throng.* ¹⁵ *Let death steal over them; let them go down to Sheol alive; for evil is in their dwelling place and in their heart.* ¹⁶ *But I call to God, and the LORD will save me.* ¹⁷ *Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice.* ¹⁸ *He redeems my soul in safety from the battle that I wage, for many are arrayed against me.* ¹⁹ *God will give ear and humble them, he who is enthroned from of old, Selah because they do not change and do not fear God.* ²⁰ *My companion stretched out his hand against his friends; he violated his covenant.* ²¹ *His speech was smooth as butter, yet war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords.* ²² *Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.* ²³ *But you, O God, will cast them down into the pit of destruction; men of blood and treachery shall not live out half their days. But I will trust in you.*



Between 9:00 AM—12:00 PM: When King Hezekiah was sick, he cast himself before the Lord in desperation (*“Like a swallow or a crane I chirp; I moan like a dove. My eyes are weary with looking upward. O Lord, I am oppressed; be my pledge of safety! —Is. 38:14).*

This once mighty, but now pitiful Old Testament King is bold and broken all at once. He’s laid so low that his prayers could be mistaken for bird clicks and peeps. Sometimes the hearts of God’s people are so anguished that their prayers are incomprehensible to others, mere murmurs and groans. But however they sound on the outside, God understands. If you’re afflicted by any ill — mind, heart, or body — sound off in words and sobs for relief and deliverance. And shout out to God for others whom you know who are in a bad way. Then sing or speak these stanzas of “May Jesus Christ Be Praised.”

1 When morning gilds the skies,
My heart awaking cries,
May Jesus Christ be praised!
Alike at work and prayer
To Jesus I repair;
May Jesus Christ be praised!

2 Does sadness fill my mind?
A solace here I find,
May Jesus Christ be praised!
Or fades my earthly bliss?
My comfort still is this,
May Jesus Christ be praised!

3 The night becomes as day,
When from the heart we say,
May Jesus Christ be praised!
The powers of darkness fear,
When this sweet chant they hear,
May Jesus Christ be praised!

Between 12:00 PM—3:00 PM: Seeing Jesus stabilizes everything for believers. Open to Matt. 3:13-17 and read about our Lord’s baptism. The passage pictures Jesus as a one-notion man, eating, fasting, sleeping and breathing only to please his Father (*“it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness”*) and to carry out ancient prophecy. What prophecy? Maybe this one from Is. 53:11b: *“by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.”* Let those sweet words rest on you. That Jesus stood firmly upon his feet again after severe pain and death, establishes our firm standing with the Father today and every tomorrow he gives us. So, with the Spirit on our heads, shoulders, knees and toes, let’s stand up and follow. But where? Talk with him about it. Say: “Lord, even as I’m sheltering in place, what should I do as a friend, family member or worker?”

Between 3:00 PM—4:00 PM: Join the **Joel Moment Prayer Gathering**. Go to Zoom.com and enter Meeting ID and Password. Here’s the schedule. Please join in as you feel led:
3:00 PM—3:30 PM: Scripture, silent prayer and songs. 3:30 PM—4:00 PM: Breakout Prayer Groups.

Please feel free to leave the meeting at 4:00 PM. However, we won’t shut it down until we sense it’s time to do so. So, starting at 4:00 PM, we’ll jump from square to square on Zoom, building each other up with whatever nudges and morsels the Holy Spirit gives us that can correct and inspire our group.

Between 5:00 PM—7:00 PM: Let’s start our meals with thanksgiving for God’s gifts and for the fellowship we enjoyed with him today. After dinner, we might have fun and laughter with the people we live with. Or we might call and encourage someone who lives alone and needs our support.

Between 7:00—10:00 PM: Revisit Psalm 55 on the first page of the Prayer Guide. Go over just the words and phrases that you underlined or highlighted. It’s dark outside, but hopefully our souls have a glow (*“In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety” — Ps. 4:8).*



Here are the Scripture passages and songs that the leaders will share during the **Joel Moment Prayer Gathering** from 3:00—4:00 PM. We provide them so that you can follow along if that helps you to concentrate.

KURT J.—^{ESV} **2 Chronicles 20:1-4** *After this the Moabites and Ammonites, and with them some of the Meunites, came against Jehoshaphat for battle. ² Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, "A great multitude is coming against you from Edom, from beyond the sea; and, behold, they are in Hazazon-tamar" (that is, Engedi). ³ Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. ⁴ And Judah assembled to seek help from the LORD; from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.*

ANDY D.—^{ESV} **2 Chronicles 20:5-12** *And Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, ⁶ and said, "O LORD, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you. ⁷ Did you not, our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? ⁸ And they have lived in it and have built for you in it a sanctuary for your name, saying, ⁹ 'If disaster comes upon us, the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before you-- for your name is in this house-- and cry out to you in our affliction, and you will hear and save.' ¹⁰ And now behold, the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom you would not let Israel invade when they came from the land of Egypt, and whom they avoided and did not destroy-- ¹¹ behold, they reward us by coming to drive us out of your possession, which you have given us to inherit. ¹² O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you."*

JAIME B.—^{ESV} **2 Chronicles 20:13-19** *Meanwhile all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children. ¹⁴ And the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. ¹⁵ And he said, "Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the LORD to you, 'Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God's. ¹⁶ Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the valley, east of the wilderness of Jeruel. ¹⁷ You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.' Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, and the LORD will be with you." ¹⁸ Then Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the LORD, worshipping the LORD. ¹⁹ And the Levites, of the Kohathites and the Korahites, stood up to praise the LORD, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice.*



CRAIG S.—^{ESV} **2 Chronicles 20:20-23** *And they rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. And when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the LORD your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed." ²¹ And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the LORD and praise him in holy attire, as they went before the army, and say, "Give thanks to the LORD, for his steadfast love endures forever." ²² And when they began to sing and praise, the LORD set an ambush against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so that they were routed. ²³ For the men of Ammon and Moab rose against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, devoting them to destruction, and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they all helped to destroy one another.*

RICHARD D.—"A Mighty Fortress is Our God"

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe
His craft and pow'r are great, and, armed with cruel hate
On earth is not his equal

And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure
One little word shall fell him

That word above all earthly pow'rs, no thanks to them, abideth
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him Who with us sideth
Let God's and kindred go, this mortal life also
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still
His kingdom is forever.

THOMAS S.—^{ESV} **2 Chronicles 20:24-30** *When Judah came to the watchtower of the wilderness, they looked toward the horde, and behold, there were dead bodies lying on the ground; none had escaped. ²⁵ When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take their spoil, they found among them, in great numbers, goods, clothing, and precious things, which they took for themselves until they could carry no more. They were three days in taking the spoil, it was so much. ²⁶ On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Beracah, for there they blessed the LORD. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Beracah to this day. ²⁷ Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat at their head, returning to Jerusalem with joy, for the LORD had made them rejoice over their enemies. ²⁸ They came to Jerusalem with harps and lyres and trumpets, to the house of the LORD. ²⁹ And the fear of God came on all the kingdoms of the countries when they heard that the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel. ³⁰ So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around.*



LAURA D.—^{ESV} **2 Chronicles 20:31-34** *Thus Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah. He was thirty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. ³² He walked in the way of Asa his father and did not turn aside from it, doing what was right in the sight of the LORD. ³³ The high places, however, were not taken away; the people had not yet set their hearts upon the God of their fathers. ³⁴ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, from first to last, are written in the chronicles of Jehu the son of Hanani, which are recorded in the Book of the Kings of Israel.*

GROUP PRAYER PROMPT #1 (9 min.): Psalm 96:9 says: *“Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth!”* Let’s set our faces towards God, our only security in a world that has been shaken. Praise him for his power and uniqueness, for he is incomparable and deserves to hear it from our lips.

GROUP PRAYER PROMPT #2 (9 min.): Jonah 2:9b says: *“Salvation belongs to the LORD!”* The Ninevites repented and God spared them. Pray for widescale turning to God, followed by times of refreshing for our neighbors, the nation and the world (Acts 3:20).

GROUP PRAYER PROMPT #3 (9 min.): Let’s broaden our prayers and heave all our cares upon the strong shoulders of the Lord. Pray for leaders, doctors, sick people, job creation, friends, enemies and whatever or whoever else comes to mind. Ask God what you can do to help someone else.

If you’d like to *“share your bread with the hungry”* (Is. 58:7) in the name of Jesus, just shop for these items below and our Shepherd’s Table Ministry Leader Tim Gildersleeve will pick them up from your porch (with social distancing). For more information: 650-383-8097 or info@valleychurch.org.

Vegetables:	Beverages:	Pasta:	Oil and vinegar
Cans of peas	Fruit drinks	Spaghetti	Jelly/jam and Jell-O
Cans of green beans	Sports drinks	Pasta	Cake mixes
Cans of corn	Snapple	Pasta sauce	Syrup
Pinto beans	Coffee and tea	Cans of tomato	
Cans of kidney beans	Cocoa mix	Macaroni and cheese	
Cans of garbanzo beans		Cans of tomato sauce	
Instant mashed potatoes	Meats:		
Baked beans	Spam and ham	Misc. Items:	
	Cans of tuna	Rice	
Fruits:	Cans of chicken	Grocery gift cards	
Cans of fruit	Cans of turkey	Popcorn	
Dried fruit	Cans of chile	Peanut butter	
Fruit cups	Cans of stew	Mayo	
		Salt and flour	