

## Making the Most of Wednesday, August 5

*"...that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, <sup>16</sup> and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility" –Eph. 2:15-16*



**BETWEEN 6:00—9:00 AM:** The sign at the bottom of the trail warned, "Know your limits. You are responsible for your own safety...Take plenty of water." Little did Becky and I know when we set out for our hike that we'd encounter a refreshing human spring at the summit. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Last Wednesday morning, we ditched the kids for an adventure on the outskirts of Palm Desert. (I say "ditched," but they were happy to stay in the air-conditioned condo!) We learned from Alltrails.com about a popular hike called the Cross Loop. It wasn't long, but it was steep, rising about eight-hundred feet in just over a mile and a half. The rough path led to a metal cross that overlooked the Santa Rosa Mountains and the Coachella Valley. We had water, snacks and a go get 'em spirit.

When we arrived at the top, there were a number of people milling around, including exercisers, young adults, members of a local cross country team, and an African American woman named "Cree." Jesus said: *"Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"* — John 7:38. Well, Cree was bubbling over with the Holy Spirit and we got soaked!

What was she doing? Simply leading her two daughters in prayer at the foot of the big cross. You can see the two teenage girls in the picture to the right. You can just make out Cree who is kneeling behind the girl in black. Our sister in Christ was calling out to God, asking with reverence and urgency for him to end the pandemic and to heal virus-stricken people. We noticed that she asked God to heal believers and unbelievers alike. She also prayed for an end to racial strife. What struck us was how energized she was to talk out loud to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ without any embarrassment (*"I'm not ashamed of the gospel"* — Rom. 1:16). You could no more stop a geyser than you could cap our Sister Cree as requests and praises poured out. She was alive with the Spirit of our God. With that inspiration, and with the help of Ps. 104, honor and exalt the Lord who waters barren lands and thirsty believers.

**BETWEEN 9:00-12:00 PM:** When Cree was finished praying, she started singing an Elevation worship song called “Do It Again.” (Robyn will play it later at Joel Moment.) Then, at a pause, we introduced ourselves. We told her how much her bold witness for Jesus lifted us. We asked her if she had a good church and she told us the name of her fellowship and then she invited us. We had never laid eyes on this woman before and probably won’t again before we meet in the Kingdom of God, but one thing was clear: we are family, members of God’s new and permanent race. We asked if we could pray together and she was delighted. After asking God to bless her and her daughters, we went on our way. Read Eph. 2:11-22 and reflect on how only the cross can ultimately cure racial problems by creating one united people.

**11** *Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands--*

**12** *remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.*

**13** *But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*

**14** *For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility*

**15** *by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace,*

**16** *and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.*

**17** *And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.*

**18** *For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.*

**19** *So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,*

**20** *built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,*

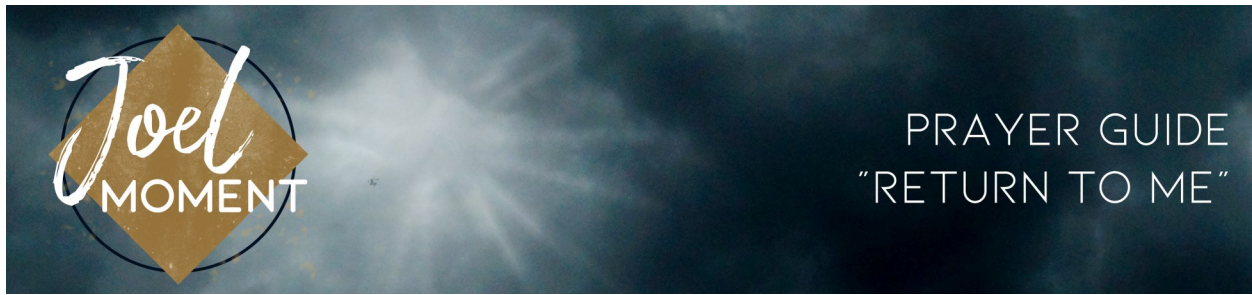
**21** *in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.*

**22** *In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*

**BETWEEN 12:00-3:00 PM:** The bronze plaque at the base of the cross said: “This Cross is the Christian Symbol of Eternal Salvation” and “Grace and Peace to you through Jesus Christ our Lord,” which is from Eph. 1:2. Visitors had left painted rocks and markers expressing their longings, loves, griefs and hopes. One stone said “God Protect Our Fam.” The rectangular sign you see was put there by someone who lost their father. It said “Unseen, unheard, but always near, Still loved, still missed and very dear.” Even unbelievers know that there’s power in the cross of Jesus. Pray for those who see the cross at the top of our building as they drive by on Stelling and Hwy. 280. Ask that the “*eyes of [their] hearts would be enlightened*” to its significance, and that they wouldn’t see it as a good luck charm (Eph. 1:18). Then open your mouth and pray like Cree.







**BETWEEN 3:00—4:00 PM:** Join the **Joel Moment Prayer Gathering**. Go to [Zoom.com](https://zoom.us/j/315346841) and enter Meeting ID 315 346 841 and Password "lament".

**BETWEEN 5:00-9:00 PM:** We read that Palm Desert locals love to do the Cross Loop on full-moon nights. Here's a picture that somebody took of the cross during a solar eclipse. This reminded me of our theme book, Joel, and what the prophet said about signs in the heavens and the assurance of rescue for those who lift their voices to Jesus the Savior:

ESV **Joel 2:30-32** *"And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. <sup>31</sup> The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. <sup>32</sup> And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD calls.*



### **50 Volunteer Spots Now Available at CityTeam — Join Darren on August 13 or take another slot.**

Here's a message from CityTeam: *With such prevalent job loss, uncertainty, and hardships of all kinds, it has been even more difficult for people to make ends meet each month. Since March, we've served more men, women, and children coming to CityTeam looking for help. Right now, food insecurity is a particular challenge.*

*As a result, our food distribution program has continued to expand to offer more help. By providing fresh produce, groceries, and hygiene supplies for households at risk of hunger and even homelessness, we can share God's love in tangible ways to address immediate needs and enable lasting solutions.*

*Volunteers are critical to our ability to meet the present needs in our community. We are looking to fill 50 volunteer spots next week, and each week throughout summer. If you are looking for opportunities to serve, or have a student age 14+ who is looking to use their summer break in meaningful ways, you will find more information below on the two main ways we need particular help over the next 6 weeks:*

**Clothing Distribution:** *Sorting, organizing, and racking clothes.*

**Food Distribution:** *We are currently operating 26 mobile food pantry sites and need volunteers to help with food distribution, and in some cases, doorstep delivery at senior and low-income apartment complexes.*

*CityTeam follows the highest health and safety standards across all our sites. Gloves and masks are required for all volunteer shifts and are made available. Clothing is quarantined for two weeks before being sorted, organized, and racked for distribution. Food handling follows all safety regulations. Sign-up to help by visiting the website <https://cityteam.volunteerhub.com/lp/cityteamsanjose/> or by clicking on the CityTeam link in the Joel Moment email.*



**DAVE BROWER** [You'll hear the story of a man who by his own admission is a work in progress.]

<sup>ESV</sup> **Philippians 1:6** *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*

*Jot down insights God gives you while Dave shares and be ready to share at Joel Moment Part 2:*

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**LANI YU** [She'll share Scripture and ask God to heal divisions between people by opening all eyes — brown, blue, gray, green and amber — to the one who died to overcome sin and ancient hatreds.]

<sup>ESV</sup> **Ephesians 2:11-22** *Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands-- <sup>12</sup> remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup> For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility <sup>15</sup> by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, <sup>16</sup> and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. <sup>17</sup> And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. <sup>18</sup> For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. <sup>19</sup> So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, <sup>21</sup> in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*

*Jot down insights God gives you while Lani reads and prays at Joel Moment Part 2:*

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**ROBYN COOPER** [She'll introduce this worship song that our Sister Cree was singing at the foot of the Palm Desert cross and urge us to hear the Lord's voice as we listen.]

**"Do It Again" by Elevation Worship**

Walking around these walls  
I thought by now they'd fall  
But You have never failed me yet  
Waiting for change to come  
Knowing the battle's won  
For You have never failed me yet

Your promise still stands  
Great is Your faithfulness, faithfulness  
I'm still in Your hands  
This is my confidence, You've never failed me yet

I know the night won't last  
Your Word will come to pass  
My heart will sing Your praise again  
Jesus, You're still enough  
Keep me within Your love  
My heart will sing Your praise again

Your promise still stands  
Great is Your faithfulness, faithfulness  
I'm still in Your hands  
This is my confidence, You never failed

Your promise still stands  
Great is Your faithfulness, faithfulness  
I'm still in Your hands  
This is my confidence, You never failed me yet

I've seen You move, come move the mountains  
And I believe, I'll see You do it again  
You made a way, where there was no way

And I believe, I'll see You do it again

I've seen You move, come move the mountains  
And I believe, I'll see You do it again  
You made a way, where there was no way  
And I believe, I'll see You do it again

I've seen You move, come move the mountains  
And I believe, I'll see You do it again  
You made a way, where there was no way  
And I believe, I'll see You do it again

I'll see You do it again  
Oh-oh

Your promise still stands  
Great is Your faithfulness, faithfulness  
I'm still in Your hands  
This is my confidence, You never failed

Your promise still stands  
Great is Your faithfulness, faithfulness  
I'm still in Your hands  
This is my confidence, You never failed me yet

And You never failed me yet  
I never will forget  
You never failed me yet  
And I never will forget



**GROUP PRAYER PROMPT (30 min.):** One rock at the base of the Palm Desert cross said in red capital letters “KEEP FIGHTING.” You can see it in the picture on the previous page. That’s good advice for us as we contend in prayer the way Epaphras did. Here’s what the Apostle Paul wrote about him.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Colossians 4:12** *Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.*

So, please pray now with your brothers and sisters according to how the Lord prompts you on the inside. Pray for presidents, protesters and everyone in between. And remember that some of our church family members seems to be scattering. Pray like Epaphras that they won’t wilt and that they’ll carry out the Lord’s will in their lives while enjoying his protection and blessings. Ask God to show us how to stay together as a church. Maybe you can text or call someone you haven’t seen in a while.

**Record what God shows you in Joel Moment, Part 2 — that is, the time after 4:00 PM — when we share Scripture, intercede and support each other as the Holy Spirit leads us.**

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