

## A Verse to Live by

“The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.”

Romans 8:6 (NIV)

### April Prayer Focus

This month pray for several individuals you know that are unsaved. Pray for them every day in the month of April. Pray that God would soften their hearts and prepare them to hear the Gospel. And then pray for God to bring you an opportunity, or someone else in their life to share the truth of Jesus with them.

### Life Application Challenge

Those people you are praying for this month; share the Gospel story with them. This takes courage, but take heart, you are not doing this alone, “I can

do all things through him who strengthens me.” (Phil. 4:13) It can be a tract you give them, a book you buy, or a face to face discussion.

### Recommended Scripture Reading

Matthew 26-28

This is the account of Jesus’ arrest, crucifixion and His resurrection. And His final instruction for us.

Romans 8

A chapter full of hope and the promises for each of us who believe.

# Church On Fire!

Eleventh Street Church of God | April 2021 Prayer Newsletter

this changes  
**EVERYTHING.**



## Easter: Honoring His Sacrifice, Celebrating Our Hope

We are just a few days away from one of the holiest holidays for Christians. I have always loved Easter. As a kid the excitement of waking up to an Easter basket and knowing summer was closer was the highlight for me. As an adult that excitement remained, but it was now waiting to see my children's happy faces as they saw their Easter baskets. The true significance of Easter I did not grasp until much later. Sure I knew what it meant; I was raised in church. I had the knowledge that Christ died for me and the understanding that it was a beautiful thing. But the resurrection took on a whole new meaning to me, a whole new importance, when my son went to Heaven.

When we are new parents, we focus so much on the firsts. First steps, first words, first time they say mama or dada, etc. And indeed those are important and exciting. But the lasts: the last time they cuddle us, the last time they hug us, the last time we saw them, the last time we held them, their last words to us.... Those "lasts" are really where the biggest impact on our lives happen. They are branded in our minds as memories and attached to those memories are deep, raw emotions. I can tell you from experience, we remember the lasts far more than the firsts.

Of course, Jesus' whole life was on another level; every moment of His life recorded in the Bible impacts us. But His willingness to take punishment for us, His willing sacrifice, His willingness to suffer, His last days on earth impact us far more than anything else. The last day He was "alive", His last moments on the cross, and then 3 days later - those "lasts" changed everything for us and our faith. Our hope and eternity are based on His last days. Please don't misunderstand me; His whole life mattered, from birth to the grave, and from the grave to His ascension into Heaven on Mount Olivet. But our relationship and reconciliation to God is not built on His healings, conquering demons or miracles. Our relationship is built on the crucifixion and resurrection, "And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith." (1 Cor. 15:14) Our hope, our eternal future is only because of His rising from that grave. The perfect life we all long for, without worry, sickness, pain and death...that is only possible because of the choices Christ made on His last days on earth. He died for our sins and then **He rose** so that we too can inherit our place in God's Kingdom, "and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ," (Ro. 8:17a) Realize what this means for us - nothing can take away our hope. Christ being raised from the dead is our proof we will be too, as well as those we love who have passed away. That is what Paul meant when he wrote "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep." (1 Cor. 15:20) Because of His sacrifice we can believe and hold on to this guarantee: "For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation,

will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Ro. 8:38-39) We know all things will work for our good, yes even death, "And we know that in **all things** God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." (Ro. 8:28) We really have nothing to fear.

This hope is not possible by our own power, works or successes. "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God," (Eph. 2:8) It is a direct result of having a personal relationship with the only true God, through His son, Jesus Christ. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," (1 Pe. 1:3) A simple yet powerful prayer is all it takes to become a child of God: "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." (Ro. 10:9) If you have not taken this step, I encourage you to do so. There is nothing like being a child of God. It fills your life with hope, meaning and purpose. No, I am not saying everything will be perfect, or that you will have a trouble free life. But you will have a new strength, hope and peace despite the troubles you face, "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:7) And you have the promise that "all things will work for your good" (Ro. 8:28) Don't wait to take this step. Tomorrow is not guaranteed for any of us. Ask any of our Board of Elders, Pastor Randy, myself, or a friend in church if you have questions. We are here for you, you matter to us and we want to see you join the family of God.

That weight of shame you have carried for far too long, those burdens so heavy you can hardly bear, the brokenness you believe cannot be healed....come to the Father. "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. 11:28-30) Don't let satan have any more room in your mind, heart or soul. My friend, there is a better way and it comes from a loving Heavenly Father that sent His son to die for you, not because you are worthy but because to Him you were and still are and always will be worth it. He loves you, that is a promise I can 100% guarantee.

I will finish up with the words of Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit... "What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"

Watching God Work,

Carolyn Abel