

SACRED *assembly*

**Devotional
Resources**

Consecrate a fast, proclaim a sacred assembly; gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord.

[Joel 1:14]

OVERVIEW

Sacred Assembly will be a set aside time when we gather as a church to proclaim the name of God through worship, prayer, fasting, and reading the Word of God in a more intentional way. In the weeks leading up to this so-called Sacred Assembly, we will have daily devotionals and prayer points to focus on together as a unified church body. This booklet contains all of our daily devotionals. To receive our daily prayer points, please text **SACRED** to **888.744.0761** to sign up onto our text thread. These prayer points will come out daily and reflect the daily devotional schedule.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- **January 4 & 7** :: Sermon on Preparation #1
- **January 11 & 14** :: Sermon on Preparation #2
- **January 15 - 19** :: Daily Devotionals Week #1
- **January 18 & 21** :: Sacred Assembly Service
- **January 22 - 26** :: Daily Devotionals Week #2
- **January 24** :: Day of Prayer and Fasting

RESOURCES



Scan the QR Code
or visit our page
rockbridge.cc/sacred
for information on
how to fast, pray,
journal, and more.

Daily Devotional #1 - 01.15.24

Verse

1 Peter 1:14-16 :: "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance. But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy."

Devotional Thought

In this verse, Peter invites the early Christians to consecrate themselves. This word simply means **The setting apart (or dedication) of anything to the worship or service of God.**

In the OT, the Israelites would consecrate the temple, animals, fields, and even the tribe of Israel that served as the priests. These Christians lived in a world where money, pleasure, power, and dominion were the gods of the day. Many of these Christians were facing challenges, persecution, and temptations. Sound familiar?

Yet in this passage, God, through Peter (inspired by the Holy Spirit), has something to say to these early Christians:

- **HE IDENTIFIES THEM:** Peter refers to these Christians as obedient children (of God) and reminds them not to live or be ruled by their former wants.

When Peter writes, "...do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance..." he says we should not behave according to what the culture finds socially acceptable. Pursuing and living for what we see in the world is easy. This serves as a reminder for us of the darkness and deceit of what our sinful nature wants. However, we must live differently because we're made new in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).

- **HE INSTRUCTS THEM** - Peter describes how they (and we) as Christians should live. "But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct." (v.15)

Because we are his children and His people, He desires that our lives reflect and resemble Him (2 Cor. 3:18). This kind of living honors God, reflects His goodness, and is ultimately for our good. In this way, we begin to live consecrated lives that place Him first.

Our holiness is not perfection on this side of heaven, but it is intentionally aligning ourselves to God's Word and standard in our attitude, actions, and words. He makes us holy through Jesus as we humbly submit to, honor, and obey Him.

Application

It can be really easy to ask God to align with my wants rather than for me to humbly submit to Him and align to Scripture. What is one (or more) area of your life that you know is out of alignment with God's will and Word? In prayer today, think about what God would have you do to align with His Word in this area of your life.

Prayer

Lord, thank you for your faithfulness today. Holy Spirit, show me and help me know where I need to submit and surrender today, in Jesus' name, amen.

Notes

Daily Devotional #2 - 01.16.24

Verse

John 3:30 :: "He must increase, but I must decrease."

Devotional Thought

This statement was said by a man named John the Baptist (different from the apostle John, who wrote the Gospel of John). God called John to be a spiritual leader (right before Jesus started his ministry) who traveled throughout Jerusalem spreading a message He had received from God: Prepare the way of the Lord. In other words, God was about to do something important, and the Israelites needed to pay attention and prepare.

John caused a bit of a ruckus. Someone hadn't spread this type of message in 400 years. John spoke to God's people like the prophets in the Old Testament had spoken. John's message had authority and weight, and people responded by following him and getting baptized, which showed they were spiritually cleansing themselves and preparing for what God was about to do. John gained influence. He gained disciples, young leaders He would mentor. John's ministry was effective and growing.

Read John 3:22-30. Just as quickly as John had become a growing spiritual leader who was influential and gaining disciples, he was ready to give it all up so that the people who followed Him would begin to follow Jesus. Like a groomsman standing beside his best friend as his friend was getting married, John wanted all the attention to be on Jesus and none on himself. That is what humility looks like.

Humility isn't thinking less of yourself; it is thinking about yourself less. John was ready to sacrifice himself (his fame, popularity, reputation, and importance) so that people would look past him and focus on Jesus. John had fully consecrated his life to God. And Jesus invites us to do the same thing.

Application

What can you sacrifice today to think about yourself less and put God first or the needs of someone else first?

Prayer

Lord, thank you for your showing us what humility is through Jesus. Help me to be humble in my interactions today so that my life can point others to Christ. Holy Spirit, may I find my joy today in you and live a selfless life; in Jesus' name, amen.

Notes

Daily Devotional #3 - 01.17.24

Verse

Psalm 32:5 :: "Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not conceal my inquiry. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,' and you forgave me of my guilt."

Devotional Thought

Go back and read Psalm 32:1-4. David (the author) starts with a couple of worshipful statements about the amazing gift of forgiveness that he had experienced from God. What a truth: God is willing to forgive us of our sins! How can that now bring you joy?!

One way our joy can be robbed is when we hide our sins. This is what David shares for us in vivid detail in Psalm 32:2-4. When we try to hide our sins, we can:

- Feel weak (v3)
- Be anxious about it day and night (v3-4)
- Struggle feeling motivated (v4)

God created us for relationship with Him, and when we let something keep us from being completely honest with Him, it affects us. And sin makes us want to hide from God. At first, we may feel like we can avoid addressing sin in our lives, but eventually, we will begin to fill what David describes here. And the people closest to us can also be impacted by it.

But David teaches us the way forward when we find ourselves hiding in Psalm 32:5. Jesus has called us for a holy purpose. If we are to experience more of His presence in our lives, we must be ready to confess and surrender all of ourselves to Him. Jesus surrendered Himself for us on the cross and invites you to do the same for Him.

Application

Take a moment and reflect on these questions:

- Have I fully surrendered my life to Jesus so He can work in me and use me as He wants?
- Am I hiding sin from Him or others that I need to confess?
- Is there anything good in my life that has become a distraction for me and my relationship with Jesus?
- What does it look like to sacrifice that thing so that I can create more room for Jesus to work in my life?

Prayer

Thank you God, for sending Jesus to cover the penalty of my sin. God, I confess (spend a moment confessing and surrendering yourself to Jesus) to you today. I am tired of hiding. Forgive me for thinking I can hide from You, who sees and knows everything. In Jesus' name, I pray, amen.

Notes

Daily Devotional #4 - 01.18.24

Verse

Matthew 6:11-15 :: "Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. 'For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you as well. But if you don't forgive others, your Father will not forgive your offenses.'"

Devotional Thought

Jesus is giving us this lesson as a part of his teaching his disciples how to pray. It's part of "The Lord's Prayer," a simple guide for prayer principles that guide us into God's grace for our lives.

In the Lord's prayer, Jesus calls out to God as our Father, reminding us that we are brought into a family through Christ and are God's children in a new relationship of love and dependence with him. He is our Father, and we are his needy children.

Knowing we are in a relationship, it's important to understand we will have times when we wound and hurt the other person. That's why asking for forgiveness is so important. If we never ask for forgiveness, we demonstrate a lack of concern and care for what is important to the other person. So, while we stand forgiven through the cross of Christ, it's still vital for us to ask for forgiveness for those things that we recognize offend God and hurt him through our lack of trust and submission.

Then, we see a warning that our forgiveness is somewhat tied to our willingness to forgive others! However, this is not a salvation issue, as we know we will have areas of unforgiveness that we probably don't even know about. Our sins are forgiven through Jesus and His atoning work. Unforgiveness in our lives stops us from receiving grace in the areas we won't extend forgiveness.

God's grace is the healing favor we need that gives us the power to obey him and become more and more Christlike. His grace comes primarily in the form of the Holy Spirit living inside of us, empowering us.

Unforgiveness is a sin, as we hold on to wrongs that others have committed against us while God has lavishly poured our mercy on us. Sin is rebellion, and God calls us to be like Jesus. If we refuse to extend mercy as he extends mercy and extend forgiveness as he has extended forgiveness, we hold on to the poison of the pain, and bitterness is the result.

Let us be a people who seek to love well and forgive quickly. Love always forgives because we know we have been forgiven!

Application

As we seek to apply this to our lives, we must ask ourselves, what has God forgiven us for? Is there anything recently we haven't asked for forgiveness for? Now, ask God to bring to mind those that you might be having trouble forgiving. Let the Holy Spirit guide you and bring names to mind.

Say aloud that you forgive each person as best you can. (It can be challenging to forgive others, ask God to give you strength, say it aloud, and in His strength do it.) Do it, trusting God sees and knows, and for areas of injustice, you can entrust those to him. He has your back!

Prayer

Thank you, Father, for the mercy and forgiveness you gave me through Jesus Christ. In response to your love and forgiveness, I choose today to forgive others and release the hurt to you. I trust you with these areas of pain. Please release your grace into my life so I may walk more fully with you and bring glory to Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen.

Notes

Daily Devotional #5 - 01.19.24

Verse

Romans 12:1-2 :: "Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God."

Devotional Thought

God has saved us through Jesus and created us to be His children and bear his image. He has shown us that image through Jesus, and while we each have a different personality and different gifts and traits, we are all called to express Christ's character and show his amazing love and grace to the world. Love is the truest expression of God's nature, and love should characterize our lives.

According to Galatians 5:22-23, we should show joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These are all fruits of the Holy Spirit and clear demonstrations of the character of Christ. The bottom line is that we should look different!

So, how do we let the Holy Spirit transform our lives so that we reflect these qualities more and more daily? First, we need to offer ourselves to God intentionally. It's a choice of our will to say that today, we want more of his will than our own will. It's an intentional decision to say, "Father, I am here to serve your kingdom today, not mine."

It all starts with our minds. God calls us to live in truth, but deception will always lead us astray. So, as we start laying down our lives FOR God's kingdom and purposes, we will quickly bump into our selfish desires telling us to do the opposite of what God says is right and good. This is where the choice to live in obedience rather than selfishness will come up. But whenever we reject the bad and choose God's path, we renew our minds and allow truth to be our light and path.

Each day, we can choose the good things. Again, gentleness, kindness, patience. Love and compassion for others. As we choose these things, they will show up in our actions. We will do something kind for someone in need. We will choose a patient response to a harsh or difficult encounter. We will choose to show compassion to someone hurting. We will allow ourselves to be inconvenienced by someone or something we see from God's heart. We will choose to allow God to have control of our lives by choosing his ways.

As we renew our minds and are transformed by yielding to the truth and the leading of the Holy Spirit, we become more and more aware of what God's heart is and we grow in maturity in our understanding of what God's perfect and pure will is! We truly become more like Christ!

Application

As we think about being transformed, let's look again at that list of the fruit of the Holy Spirit: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." Which ones do we need to work on the most right now?

As we think about holiness and the quality of being set apart to God and his purposes, how should our lives look different than those who don't follow Christ? What does holiness look like in our daily lives?

Prayer

Lord, thank you for your showing us what humility is through Jesus. Thank you for your love and truth given through Jesus. Father, we ask for the grace today to walk differently and reflect Jesus's character. We ask for more of the Holy Spirit in our lives and more of his leading so that we can follow you. Help us understand holiness and being set apart for your kingdom Father! Help us to reflect your light to the world! In Jesus name, amen.

Notes

Daily Devotional #6 - 01.22.24

Verse

Nehemiah 8:6 :: "Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and with their hands uplifted all the people said, "Amen, Amen!" Then they knelt low and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and with their hands uplifted all the people said, "Amen, Amen!" Then they knelt low and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground."

Devotional Thought

Here is some context regarding the book of Nehemiah:

- Nehemiah felt a tremendous burden to rebuild the walls in the city of Jerusalem, which would represent the restoration of life for the Jewish people.
- He led a great work under pressure from Israel's enemies.
- So Ezra, the spiritual leader of Israel at the time, reads the book of the law to the people as a celebration of their devotion and commitment to living a God-centered life.
- The people intentionally set aside a time to seek the Lord.

What do we see in the people's response?

- **Worship:** Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and with their hands uplifted, all the people said, "Amen, Amen!" Then they knelt low and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

Worship is our opportunity to ascribe worth to who God is. Worship can take several forms. However, what is consistent as we encounter the Lord in worship is that we acknowledge who He is, what he's done, and our need for Him.

- **Surrender:** "...and with their hands uplifted all the people said, "Amen, Amen!"

Around the world, the sign of surrender is hands raised. God's people had spent a long time (due to sins and circumstances)

living for survival. Every person was living for themselves and doing the best they could.

However, as they sought the Lord, they surrendered and trusted God with their time, resources, safety, and lives. It's been said that surrender is spelled T-R-U-S-T. For the Israelites, this step meant putting their hope, trust, and faith in God!

- **Realignment:** "...Then they knelt low and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground."

Their physical demeanor was an expression of the disposition of their hearts. Realigning their lives is where Israel would begin to obey and live out what God was doing in their lives and nation. Realignment is where we experience the transforming work of obedience and where "rubber meets the road." We can begin to see God's work come to fruition in us when our thoughts, attitudes, and actions are aligned to bring glory to God.

Application

- **Worship:** Find a few moments to ascribe worth to God (can be at work, during prayer, but thank Him for what He's done).
- **Surrender:** Where is an area of trust that you struggle with, and is the Holy Spirit showing you that you need to surrender? Will you today?
- **Realignment:** Where in your life is there a need to realign to God's Word (attitudes, thoughts, actions, priorities, etc)? Ask the Lord to lead you and take the step to share it with someone today.

Prayer

Thank you God, for your faithfulness and for continuing to call us into a relationship with you. Today, help me surrender the areas I tend to hold onto. Holy Spirit, help me be humble and honor what you have shown me through realigning myself to your Word in the areas of my life you show. In Jesus' name, amen.

Notes

Daily Devotional #7 - 01.23.24

Verse

Colossians 3:16 :: "Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts."

Devotional Thought

Let's use Colossians 3:16 to answer this question: what kind of worship does God want from us?

God wants us to sing songs about God.

- When we think of worship, singing should come to our minds. Worship and singing go hand in hand. We sing about things that are valuable to us. In other words, we sing about things worth something to us. As Christians, Jesus is the most valuable thing in our lives, so Paul encourages us to sing songs about Him!

God wants our songs of worship to be filled with His word

- One of the primary ways we remember Jesus' teachings, promises, and biblical stories of His faithfulness is by singing about them! So, we should want our worship songs filled with God's word. Our songs should always point us back to who God is and what we have seen Him do in His word.

God wants us to sing to Him.

- Paul could have written, "singing about God," instead of writing, "singing to God." Here, that word makes all the difference. We are to sing to God. Worship is a personal song from us to God. When we worship God through singing, we connect our hearts with God's heart. And when we connect our heart with God's heart, His Spirit consecrates our passions and desires and fills us with His passions and desires so we can worship Him in all parts of our lives and be used by Him!

Application

What is one worship song that leads you to connect with God in a personal way?

- What verse in the bible does this song point you to?
- What does this song say about God?
- Why does this song encourage you?

Prayer

God, I thank you for allowing me to worship you. It is truly an honor that we join creation in praising you. Today, I will choose to worship you throughout the day. I plan to reflect on this verse and listen to this song throughout the day. Speak to me through worship today! In Jesus name, amen.

Notes

Daily Devotional #8 - 01.24.24

Verse

John 15:4 :: "Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me."

Devotional Thought

John 15:4-5 holds two great truths: (1) We are in God, and He is in us. (2) Only through the empowering Holy Spirit can we live the consecrated life. Let's explore these truths today.

- We are in God, and He is in us:

God wants us to be aware of this amazing reality: we are in God, and He is in us. Just like a branch is connected to a tree, God wants us to be aware of our connection with Him because of Jesus.

How can this be? The Spirit of God that empowered Jesus and raised Jesus from the grave is inside each of us! God wants to fill us with His presence the way He filled Jesus with His presence. Because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, we have gained complete access to God. And we are able because the Spirit of God enables us with faith and power to live a new life for God. We can consecrate ourselves with hope and faith because we are not on our own; the same Spirit that raised Jesus is bringing us new growth in our faith!

- Only through the empowering Holy Spirit can we live the consecrated life:

What can we expect to accomplish for God on our own strength? Jesus is clear: nothing. Let that word sink in. Let it bring you back to Jesus.

- What did you and I do to help Jesus do miraculous things?
- What did you and I do to help Jesus endure the cross?
- What did you and I do to help raise Jesus from the dead?
- What did you and I do to help Jesus send the Spirit to start the church?
- What could you and I have done to earn our salvation? What did you and I do to make ourselves new in Christ?
- The answer is **NOTHING!**

The power of the Holy Spirit did all these things. And we only have access to this life-giving power when we live in a place of absolute dependence on God to work His power through the Spirit in us. In the same way, a branch is dependent on the tree for everything it needs to produce the fruit it was made to produce.

Application

Is there a situation you are trying to fix in your power and wisdom right now? Come back to this place of absolute dependence and surrender. Like a branch, connect yourself to Jesus. Connect yourself to his words and promises, and let them empower you to give up control and walk by faith in hope today.

Prayer

Thank you God, for sending the Holy Spirit to fill us and empower us to live for you. Holy Spirit, enable me to reconnect to Jesus today with fresh dependence and surrender. I want to receive what only you can give me: new life and new faith! In Jesus' name, amen.

Notes

Daily Devotional #9 - 01.25.24

Verse

Ephesians 6:18-20:: "Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints. Pray also for me, that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel. For this I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I might be bold enough to speak about it as I should."

Devotional Thought

In this passage from Ephesians 6, Paul talks about putting on the "full armor of God" so that we can stand against our adversary, the devil, and his schemes. It has been said that when we put on the armor, we put on Christ himself by faith. We stand by faith in his nature and character, armed with the truth and righteousness he purchased for us through the cross.

Then, at the conclusion, he gives us these charges to PRAY. We are encouraged to pray in cooperation with the leading of the Holy Spirit, allowing the Spirit to guide our thoughts and continual prayers because the Spirit knows what is most important and where our prayers need to be directed.

We also see that Paul depends on the church's prayers! He has come to a place where he understands his weakness and dependency on prayer for boldness in sharing the Gospel. Paul knew that through the prayers of others, he could succeed!

Paul also sees that he needs words from the Spirit and not his own words. He needs words that have power in them, the power to convict and change lives. He knows that this power does not come from within himself. **So, what does this tell us about prayer?**

- God calls us to partner with him through prayer.

We partner with God, and it has real results! We don't fully know how it works, but when we cry out to God and pray, asking for

what we believe God already wants to do and what he has promised, God releases his grace and power so that we can accomplish his will and purposes. But we must pray and ask!

- **NOT PRAYING** does withhold resources that could be going out to ourselves and others.

As we have realized recently, God wants to be sought, and he wants to be asked. It's a part of our relationship with him and our responsibility as his family to seek his power and will. Prayer is a chief way we must do that. Prayer is a critical part of our warfare, and the mission of the Church moves forward when the Church prays!

- Prayer **MUST** be a regular part of our relationship with God!

It doesn't have to be a lot of words! It can be as simple as a cry for help! But it should come from our hearts as his children, reaching out in faith that our Father cares and wants to help us! So, let's ensure prayer is a fundamental part of our daily lives with God!

Application

- What holds most people back from prayer? Is it knowing how to pray or believing it matters? What about you?
- Now that we've discussed this, how can you make prayer more a part of your life?

Prayer

Thank you God for the privilege of prayer. Father, forgive us for not realizing the honor of being able to talk to and communicate with you and give our needs and cares to you. But also forgive us for not seeing prayer as a responsibility, as we are called to pray for one another, and when we don't, we fail to step into the grace and power that is freely available to us! Father, give us new faith to pray and help us step up and do it! In Jesus name, amen.

Notes

Daily Devotional #10 - 01.26.24

Verse

Galatians 2:20 :: "I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Devotional Thought

The word Gospel itself means Good News! Throughout the New Testament, we read and understand that the good news is that Jesus Christ, the King, has come to save us all from our sins. He lived the perfect life for us, shed his blood on the cross to pay for our sins, and then was raised to life so that death would forever be defeated and that we could have eternal life in him.

The Gospel represents the defining work that we need in our lives. We must embrace daily death to our sinful nature and yield to the leading of the Holy Spirit inside of us. As Christians, we live each day by trusting in the completed work of Christ. It is never something we earn, as it is a gift of love from our Father and Jesus Christ. We embrace it and step into it by believing it is true and for US!

We often get in the way of living out the Gospel when we get our eyes back on us. We start to think that we need to earn God's favor again. But it is always a gift of grace, and when we move into earning things, we step OUT of the work of the cross and miss out on the grace God has for us that is from love. He's not calling us to earn his love but simply to respond to his love by loving him back.

Living a Gospel-Centered life means we realize that the message of what Jesus did is the message we need for that day. Jesus has given us all we need, and we need to share that message with others! No matter what they have done or how far they feel they have fallen, the Gospel is more powerful than their sin and failures, and Jesus can save them.

The Gospel is the power of God to save us!

Application

What does it look like for you to live out a Gospel-centered day? As you think about the work of Christ, how should His work impact our lives and the lives of others?

Prayer

Thank you Father God for the greatest gift ever, the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Thank you for making a way for us to be reconciled to you through what Jesus did on the cross and for the guarantee of eternal life that you provided through Christ's resurrection! Truly, we are amazed that you love us enough to pursue and save us! ²³Thank you for your great love! In Jesus' name, amen.

Notes

Notes



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