

PRAYER & FASTING GUIDE BY SHORELINE CITY

01/7 - 01/21

# ALL THINGS NEW



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# *new* PRIORITY

*“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”  
(Matthew 6:33)*

Many times when we go into a new year we find ourselves setting goals for our lives. We allow ourselves to dream of what the future could hold for us, we make plans, put things on the calendar, write down vision statements, maybe you even cut pictures out of magazines and make yourself a vision board. All of these things are good, we should dream and try to achieve everything God has put inside of us this year. He created us for greatness, He created us to bring Heaven to Earth in all that we do and all that we are.

Perhaps you find yourself unable to dream, unable to ask for something new or different, maybe you can't imagine there is something good in store for you, maybe you are looking at your current circumstances and it doesn't look like you even have the means to pay bills let alone believe for a dream to come to pass. Regardless of the camp you find yourself in Jesus tells us all how we should be approaching anything that we do, “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

We seek His kingdom through prayer, reading the Bible, meditating on what we have read, journaling, being planted in church, surrounding ourselves with healthy community, spending time in worship and fasting. This by no means is an exhaustive list but these are all ways we can learn to put Him first, to work a new muscle and create healthy habits that will align our hearts with the Father. By doing these things we remove idols from the throne of our hearts that have tried to take God's place and it removes the fear that may be rendering us paralyzed and unable to take steps to become free and whole.

As we embark on a new year may we all have a new priority, a new way to keep ourselves centered; His kingdom. When we seek first His kingdom we obtain a new filter by which we make decisions. Before we create the vision board may we pray and ask God for His wisdom and direction. Before we add things to our calendar may we ask the Father if that is something He wants us to invest our time or money into. Before we start that relationship may we ask Him if this relationship is His best for us. Before we look for the new job may we ask if this transition is one He would have us make or if it's being made out of frustration or fear. When He is at the center of all we do He will add everything we need or lack. Perhaps our definition of "need" and "lack" will even change when He is our priority. We are no longer enamored with impressing people with the things we have, we are no longer striving to be successful to prove to the world we are powerful because God already calls us whole and complete, even without all those things. The only thing we begin to care about is what God says about us and being near Him.

When this becomes our new priority every day we are setting ourselves up to grow exponentially both spiritually but also emotionally and mentally. This year be mindful of where this falls in priorities, and actively protect this practice of seeking Him first.

## ***PRAYER***

FATHER I ASK THAT YOU WILL GIVE ME THE DESIRE TO SEEK YOU. DRAW ME CLOSER TO YOU, OPEN MY EARS TO HEAR YOUR VOICE AND MAKE MY SPIRIT HUNGRY FOR YOUR PRESENCE. TEACH ME YOUR WILL, SHUT DOORS THAT WILL KEEP ME FROM YOU, OPEN DOORS THAT WILL ALLOW ME TO PURSUE YOU. AS I SEEK YOU FIRST I TRUST YOU WILL PROVIDE ALL THAT I NEED BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT A GOD WHO SHOULD LIE BUT YOU KEEP YOUR WORD TO ME. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.

# *new* COMMUNITY

*And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. (Mark 1:17-18)*

**If there was anyone** who could have lived their life and accomplished their calling alone it would have been Jesus, but He didn't. This was one of the first things He set out to do when he started His public ministry because He would need people and people needed Him. In other words, He created a community.

The disciples were no different from all of us, some had shady histories and made poor choices, or shunned by society, but they were still chosen by Jesus. Even Judas who would choose to betray Jesus just a few years later, was still called to community. Jesus knew community would be mandatory for what they were called to do, it would make each of the disciples better, it would also give them purpose. We read throughout the New Testament the disciples didn't always get along, they didn't always see eye to eye, they didn't always like each other, but their ability to work through their differences brought unity and power to what they were called to do.

Today's culture can encourage us to avoid community, to be isolated, to fear being in relationship with others. The importance Jesus placed on community is still applicable today. That is why connect groups are such an important part of being planted at Shoreline City. We recognize community is essential for us to develop and grow into the men and women He has created us to be. We may find ourselves in a group with people we maybe wouldn't have chosen because they think different, look different, vote different, they are in a different tax bracket or relationship status. This doesn't mean we are in the wrong group, it means we have been presented with an opportunity to grow and mature, to fight

for unity and understanding.

Community is actually a gift, when we live our lives inside of a bubble it stunts our growth. When there is friction, we are taught empathy, compassion, curiosity about people and perhaps your new best friend is sitting in that group with you. When you are planted in community, you don't walk through life alone and you are less likely to quit and uproot yourself when things get hard because you have people that have become family surrounding you. Jesus shows us that He needed community to accomplish His purpose and teaches us we need community to accomplish ours.

## ***CHALLENGE***

If you have not yet been plugged into a connect group, you can find one here. If you have been in a connect group for a while, now it's your turn to lead one! Find a friend (or two) and text "GROUPS" to 73000 to find or host a group.

## ***PRAYER***

FATHER THANK YOU FOR THE GIFT OF COMMUNITY. I ASK THAT YOU WOULD SURROUND ME WITH MEN AND WOMEN WHO WILL PUSH ME CLOSER TO YOU, GIVE ME THE BOLDNESS TO STEP OUT THIS YEAR AND GET PLANTED IN A CONNECT GROUP. HELP ME FIND THOSE PEOPLE WHO WILL PULL GREATNESS OUT OF ME, WHO WILL CHALLENGE ME, LOVE ME, ENCOURAGE ME, HOLD ME ACCOUNTABLE, CELEBRATE WITH ME AND SURROUND ME WHEN DIFFICULTIES ARISE. I THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR THOSE YOU BRING INTO MY LIFE, HELP ME TO SEE THEM AS THE GIFTS THEY ARE, IN JESUS' NAME. AMEN.

# *new* CREATION

*“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are made new.”(2 Corinthians 5:17)*

Jesus was the price for our salvation, He died and rose from the grave so we could live. God made a way for all of us because the space between us and the Father was too great we would never be able to do enough good deeds or sacrifice enough to get us to the Father. But our debt needed to be paid, and in God’s kindness and provision, He also provided the payment for us and that payment was Jesus. When we surrender our lives to Jesus, acknowledge His work on the cross and our need for His salvation, the sin that once ruled us is washed away and we become new. Psalm 103:12 paints this picture beautifully, “as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”

The part that can be challenging and a lifelong pursuit of not going back to the old behaviors and lifestyles that fed our flesh. When we make the decision to follow Jesus we may need to make changes to set ourselves up for success. One of our 12 stones is, “we fight for surrender.” This means we actively fight our flesh and the desires of our heart that would cause us to drift back in our old ways that were destructive. We fight for surrender in our actions and in our thoughts.

Sometimes we need permission to walk away from who we once were, and the cross gives us that permission and places a demand on us to be a new creation. We may need to adjust who we allow to speak into our lives. We may need to change our friend circle because our old friendships pushed us towards brokenness and sometimes our friends won’t accept us to be who God is calling us to be. We may need to avoid certain books and music. We need to be willing to lay down everything that is a barrier for us.

You are not what you once did, you are not who you once were. The cross says you have been made new and you were worth the price Jesus paid. The cross doesn't demand perfection but it does demand surrender. Each day when we choose to put God first we are actively taking steps towards His will for our lives and away from the enemy's plan for our life. The enemy's only plan is to steal, kill and destroy but God's plan is for us to have life and have it in its fullness (John 10:10).

In Him, you are a new creation and through Him, He is making all things new.

## ***PRAYER***

FATHER THANK YOU FOR MAKING A WAY FOR ME WHEN THERE WAS NO WAY. THANK YOU FOR SEEING ME WORTHY OF JESUS' SACRIFICE. LORD WOULD YOU CONTINUE TO MAKE ME NEW, WOULD YOU UPROOT THE OLD HABITS THAT PUSHED ME FROM YOU AND PLANT NEW HABITS THAT MAKE ME MORE LIKE YOU. HELP ME AS I FIGHT FOR SURRENDER, SURROUND ME WITH HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS, SHOW ME THE AREAS OF MY LIFE THAT DO NOT BRING YOU GLORY. WOULD YOU REMOVE THE HUNGER I HAVE FOR THE WAYS OF THE WORLD, MAY I HUNGER AND THIRST FOR YOUR WAYS. HELP ME TO LIVE THE LIFE YOU HAVE PROMISED ME AND NOTHING LESS. IN JESUS' NAME. AMEN.



# *new* FAITH

*“Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.” “Come,” he said.*

*Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!” Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?” (Matthew 14:28-31)*

**The disciples were** crossing the lake when a big storm rolled in. They weren’t in a yacht, they were in an uncovered fishing boat exposed to the elements. Jesus wasn’t with the disciples when they launched out, but in the midst of the storm He came out to them. Like any normal person, because a person walking on the water is not “normal”, they believed Jesus was a ghost coming towards them and this is where the verse picks up. Can you imagine how chaotic this whole scenario must have been? Between the actual storm, the disciples probably panicking trying to get the water out of the boat, arguing with each other about whose fault it is why they were in this position, fearing they won’t even make it to shore, and now there is a “ghost.” Some were probably wondering, “what else could possibly go wrong?”

While we may not find ourselves in the middle of a lake in a literal storm, we can all probably relate to what these disciples were feeling. We have all faced situations that felt chaotic and out of control and have wondered, “what else could possibly go wrong?” Storms are the times most of us will find cover, try to get out of the storm, cling to the boat, not get OUT of it. What I appreciate is Peter’s faith in this story. He was also experiencing the same storm the other 11 disciples were experiencing and he saw Jesus doing something that was not possible naturally. Jesus was walking ON the water. In that moment, instead of yelling for Jesus to stop the storm or save all of them, Peter had the courage to place a miraculous demand on Jesus and said, “tell me to come to you on the water,” and Jesus did.

Because of Peter’s faith in Jesus, he was the

only one who got to walk on water. Peter believed Jesus could do the impossible, that if Jesus called him to walk on the water he would walk on the water. Jesus is a man of His word, and doesn't call us to do things we are not capable of doing. He may call us to do things we can't do in our own strength, but with Jesus leading us, we can't fail.

This faith is not unique to Peter, this faith extends to all of us as well. This year we are calling on a new faith, a faith that places a miraculous demand on Jesus. When we find ourselves in the midst of a chaotic situation that is fighting for all of our attention, we can find Jesus in the midst of it and cry out to Him to call us to walk on the water. This year may we not allow the storms to dictate what we focus on but rather we will have the faith to do the impossible in the middle of the chaos. This is where our foundation of faith lies, in the trust that Jesus is who He says He is, He does what He says He will do. He is a man of His word and if He said it, we can do it. If He calls us to get out of the boat, it's because we can walk on the water and may we have the faith to obey.

## ***PRAYER***

FATHER, THIS YEAR WOULD YOU GIVE ME A NEW LEVEL OF FAITH. WHEN I FIND MYSELF IN THE MIDST OF A STORM OR SURROUNDED BY CHAOS WOULD YOU GIVE ME THE ABILITY TO FIND YOU. GIVE ME EARS TO HEAR YOUR VOICE CALLING ME OUT ONTO THE WATER AND STEADY MY FEET TO OBEY. REMOVE FEAR FROM DICTATING MY STEPS AND REPLACE THAT FEAR WITH FAITH. WOULD YOU DO THE MIRACULOUS IN AND THROUGH ME, THAT I WOULD BE COURAGEOUS ENOUGH TO GET OUT OF THE BOAT BECAUSE YOU ARE WHO YOU SAY YOU ARE AND YOU WILL DO WHAT YOU SAID YOU WOULD DO. REMIND ME WHEN I FORGET AND SHOW ME WHEN I CAN'T SEE YOUR FINGERPRINT IN THE MIDST OF STORMS. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.

# *new* PRAYER

*“Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”  
(Mark 11:24)*

Prayer may be a new practice for you, it may be something that was done during holidays, before a meal, only by the pastor or maybe only in emergencies. Prayer is so much more than something we do casually or as an afterthought. We read in the Bible that Jesus spent a lot of time in prayer, He taught his disciples and others about prayer. Prayer wasn't an option for Jesus it was the most important thing.

Prayer is the way we connect our hearts to the Fathers. It's how we ask for help and how to say, “thank you.” Prayer is also a way we learn to hear the voice of God. It can give us the strength we need in difficult circumstances, gives us peace, provides direction when we need answers, changes our perspective, encourages our souls when we feel weary. When we pray, we aren't making requests to the sky hoping it lands on someone's ears, we are talking to the Creator of all things seen and unseen. We are calling on the One who can do the impossible, and Jeremiah 29:12-13 says, “Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” He hears you when you pray and not just hears, but He also acts.

Prayer is a powerful tool we possess. There is power in our prayers when we use the name of Jesus. Often times we can pray safe prayers, not wanting to ask too much but just enough to get by. What if we began to ask God what breaks His heart, and begin to pray for healing and restoration in those areas. What if we asked God to show us the things around us that don't look like heaven or things that are not the way God intended them to be and we begin to pray

and intercede for God to move in a powerful way to bring things back to their original design. What if we asked God to restore broken marriages, believing He can do it. What if we prayed for people suffering from mental health challenges to be completely healed, what if we prayed for God to heal the sick, what if we prayed for peace in war torn nations, what if we prayed for those in leadership instead of gossiping about them, what if we invited God to get involved in the problems in our world?

When we pray, we don't do it with a selfish motive trying to manipulate God into doing what WE want, rather when we pray we ask God what HIS will is for situations and we pray for that. When our prayers are in alignment with God's will things change and transform. When we pray God's will, we get out of the way and ask Him to do what only He can do. However, faith without works is dead so when we pray we have to be willing to say, "God if this is a challenge you want me to solve or be a part of the solution, use me." We have to be willing to pray for the miraculous, then be willing for God to use us to accomplish it. Sometimes our only role is to pray and believe for God to move and sometimes God will call on us to be the hands and feet to help facilitate His will here on earth.

This year He is calling on us to pray a new prayer, to seek Him in a new way, to hear His voice in a new way, to intercede in a new way and to believe in a new way.

## ***PRAYER***

FATHER, YOU ARE SO WORTHY OF MY TIME AND ATTENTION, YOU ALONE ARE HOLY, YOU ALONE ARE GREAT, YOU ALONE ARE POWERFUL. THANK YOU FOR HEARING ME WHEN I PRAY AND CARING ABOUT THE THINGS THAT CONCERN ME. MOVE IN POWER AND MIGHT, TEACH ME TO PRAY IN A NEW WAY, REVEAL NEW THINGS TO ME ABOUT WHO YOU ARE WHEN I PRAY. I ASK THAT YOU WOULD TEACH TO HEAR YOUR VOICE AND GIVE ME THE HUNGER TO OBEY. WOULD YOU OPEN MY EYES TO THE THINGS YOU SEE, WOULD YOU BREAK MY HEART FOR THE THINGS THAT BREAK YOURS. I ASK THAT YOU WOULD GIVE ME A PASSION TO SEE HEAVEN HERE ON EARTH, THAT I WOULD PRAY AND BELIEVE IF IT'S NOT

# *new* GRACE

Grace (n) *unmerited divine assistance given to humans for their regeneration or sanctification.*

*“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.” (Luke 22:42 )*

**Jesus knew what lay** before Him. He knew the pain He was going to experience not just physically, but also mentally and emotionally. Jesus was not the first person to experience the cross, it was a common practice the Romans used to exact judgement. So, He knew what He was about to endure. In a moment of His humanity, He prayed and asked God for another way. However, the cross was God’s plan in our salvation story. God did not coldly tell Jesus to “get up, shake it off, do what I sent you there for,” God sent an angel to strengthen Jesus, to give Him the grace He needed for what lie ahead.

Sometimes we will face trials and experience pain, we will ask God to deliver us from it (which isn’t wrong, Jesus did). However, sometimes God’s will is for us to go through it, because going through it brings purification, revelation and perseverance. If we are delivered from it, we will not see the fullness of the miracle God has in store on the other side. When God calls us to walk through the trial, He will give us the grace to do so. That does not mean it becomes easy, it doesn’t mean we won’t cry or be frustrated or have questions. It means He won’t leave us to fend for ourselves, it means He will give us the strength we need to endure, it means He has an outcome in store that is for our good and for His glory.

God doesn’t ask us to do things Jesus didn’t also do, we aren’t asked to endure pain Jesus didn’t also endure. Jesus was betrayed, abandoned, mocked, misunderstood, he experienced the loss of someone He loved, he walked with the hurting, He was isolated and eventually sentenced to death for a crime he never committed. What we can learn

from Jesus is that God's grace was ever present, helping him every step of the way.

What can help in seasons of trial and pain is knowing we don't walk through it alone, He walks with us and sometimes when we don't feel like we can put another foot in front of us, He surrounds us with people who will encourage us, pray for us and stand by our side, that is why being planted in the church is important. May we call on a new grace, that will sustain us, strengthen us, help us, purify us and transform us. May this new grace lead us to the outcome that brings all the glory to God.

## ***PRAYER***

FATHER, I ASK THAT YOU WOULD GIVE ME A NEW LEVEL OF GRACE THIS YEAR. WHEN I AM IN A POSITION THAT SEEMS TOO HARD FOR ME TO FACE, WOULD YOU GIVE ME THE GRACE TO NOT QUIT. WOULD YOU HELP ME TO SEE THAT YOU ARE IN CONTROL, YOU MAKE WAYS IN IMPOSSIBLE SITUATIONS AND THAT YOU WOULD GET THE GLORY. NOTHING IS TOO HARD FOR YOU AND IF THE SAME SPIRIT THAT RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD LIVES ON THE INSIDE OF ME, IT'S NOT TOO HARD FOR ME EITHER. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.

# *new* DESPERATION

*“And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.” (Luke 8:43-44)*

*“...Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. Then he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.” (Luke 8:47-48)*

**The story of this woman** has been told countless times, and rightfully so. She was desperate for healing, she had done everything that was possible in the natural but nothing worked. However, she heard about a man who was doing the miraculous; the blind seeing, the lame walking, the possessed being delivered and the dead coming back to life. Maybe He could help her.

She pushed her way through a massive crowd. She was desperate. She wasn't even supposed to be there because the law called her unclean, so being in public was breaking the rules. She was desperate.

She touched the hem of His garment thinking it could be done unnoticed. She was desperate.

Desperation motivates people to do things that are out of the norm. Desperation can stem from hopelessness, fear, and great need. This woman was at the end of herself, her resources, her patience, her hope and she made a decision because there was nothing else left. Her pursuit of Jesus was the only decision that led to her healing, her faith and desperation moved Jesus in such a way her story has been told for thousands of years.

Often times we will try everything before we seek Jesus. He has given us wisdom and the ability to solve problems but more often than not Jesus becomes our last option we will pursue. He is calling each of us to a deeper relationship with Him, one that requires a level of desperation. A daily reminder that without Jesus, His presence and guidance, we are nothing. We need to fix our eyes on Him, leaning on Him to show us how to love those around us, how to forgive, how to

respond to those who have hurt us, how to lead our families, how to interact with co workers, how to serve, how to give. We have become a culture that is so independent we have lost the art form of desperation. We have believed that we have graduated from needing Jesus in every aspect of our lives.

Desperation will bring breakthrough, it will bring creative ideas and new strategies, it will cause us to innovate and do things the world has never seen, it will change the course of generations, it will restore broken marriages, it will break addictions, and it will heal brokenness. As we continue to pray and fast may we begin to practice a new desperation for Jesus.

## ***PRAYER***

FATHER, I ASK FOR A NEW DESPERATION FOR THE PRESENCE OF JESUS. MAY I HUNGER AND THIRST FOR HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS. LIKE THE WOMAN WHO WAS HEALED, I ASK THAT YOU WOULD TOUCH THE BROKEN UNHEALED PLACES IN ME. REMIND ME THAT WHAT I DO ABSENT OF YOUR PRESENCE ISN'T WORTH DOING. MAY I USE THE GIFTS AND TALENTS YOU HAVE PLACED INSIDE OF ME FOR YOUR GLORY. HELP ME TO SEE THE PLACES IN MY LIFE I HAVE TRIED TO FIX ON MY OWN AND I GIVE YOU PERMISSION TO TOUCH THOSE AREAS. LORD I AM DESPERATE FOR YOU, I DON'T WANT TO LIVE THIS LIFE WITHOUT YOU. CONTINUE TO TEACH ME, LEAD ME AND GUIDE ME. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.



# *new* FORGIVENESS

*“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:34)*

Some of the last words Jesus spoke, were words asking God to extend His forgiveness to those who were crucifying Him. Instead of cursing them, promising vengeance, Jesus looked on them with pity because they didn't know who they were crucifying and even in those moments Jesus' heart was for reconciliation between God's kids and himself. Words that have echoed through the generations, “Father, forgive them...”

Perhaps Jesus had the ability to not only see those who stood before him in that moment, but He could also see each of us. And perhaps the cry of His heart He saw you and said, “them...I am doing this for them because they are worth it, Father, forgive them...” On the cross Jesus showed us what forgiveness needs to look like. A forgiveness that is radical, unfair, and sacrificial. A blueprint for what forgiveness needs to look like for us.

Forgiveness is not a word we slap on a situation that excuses pain others have caused us, extending forgiveness also doesn't mean we allow hurtful people back into our lives. Forgiveness means we release others from the debt we believe they owe us by removing the power they hold over us. Forgiveness actually means taking back our authority. Unforgiveness becomes a poison to our souls, it eats away at our peace, it causes us to become fearful or paranoid, it keeps us captive to what has been done to us and we become a slave to it.

This new level of forgiveness will require a level of emotional and spiritual maturity we have never had before and it will only come through Jesus. This new level of forgiveness we will need to look through the eyes of Jesus and say, “Father, forgive them...even if they knew what they were doing, forgive them. May they find salvation,

may they find peace, may they find wholeness.” This new level of forgiveness removes any power the enemy had to try and steal, kill and destroy our purpose.

Our hearts need to transition to see those the way Jesus does and our hearts break for them like His does. May we desire to see even those who hurt us, to be reconciled with the Father because the alternative is not something we should want for anybody. May this be a practice we continue throughout the year, that we make peace with the discomfort of it and by doing so we become more like Christ and less like the world.

## ***PRAYER***

FATHER, GIVE ME THE GRACE TO FORGIVE THOSE WHO HAVE HURT ME. I ASK THAT YOU WOULD MOVE ANY AND ALL CHAINS OF BONDAGE THAT HAVE COME FROM UNFORGIVENESS. GIVE ME EYES TO SEE THE WAY YOU DO AND THE COURAGE TO CHOOSE FORGIVENESS DAILY. I ASK THAT BY FORGIVING YOU WOULD NOT ONLY SET ME FREE BUT ALSO SET THEM FREE. YOU ARE THE JUDGE I AM NOT, I RELEASE THE WEIGHT OF JUDGEMENT INTO YOUR HANDS AND ASK THAT YOUR WILL WOULD BE DONE IN THEIR LIVES. HELP ME TO WALK THIS OUT DAILY, HELP ME TO NOT PICK IT BACK UP AND WHEN THEY WORLD DEMANDS I NOT FORGIVE, REMIND ME OF THE CROSS AND THE FORGIVENESS YOU HAVE EXTENDED TO ME. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.

*new*

# DISCERNMENT

*“The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.” (Matthew 13:24-26)*

**As we step into a new season,** we need to learn (and perhaps this is a new muscle to flex) the importance of having discernment. Like these verses in Matthew, we need to know the difference between wheat and weeds. God is calling us to do great things, and this requires knowing what is producing weeds in our life and what is producing wheat.

Being alert and aware is one of the important pieces to ensuring weeds do not grow in the midst of your “field” this year. In verse 25, Jesus mentions “sleeping,” and this was the cause of weeds being planted. This can look like us being physically tired because we are not caring for our health, getting offended, being frustrated, being hurt when someone doesn’t call you back, feeling excluded when you weren’t invited to a party, or making our lives revolve around what we do, instead of making Jesus the center.

What can be hard is knowing the difference between the two because weeds can often wear the mask of wheat. Tares are a weed that strongly resembles wheat during its sprouting phase but lacks fruit. It looks like wheat for a time, but tares do not produce good grains. They produce a toxic grain that can cause sickness or death if eaten. Weeds in our life can distract us, cause us to drift, and can rob us of the life God designs us to have.

## **WHEAT:**

Bringing Solutions  
Believing the Best  
Generosity  
Forgiveness  
Serving Others

## **WEEDS:**

Being Critical  
Being Suspicious  
Stinginess  
Unforgiveness  
Sitting Idly

We cannot be moved by people's words; we need to be moved by fruit. People are well-meaning, but what they provide could be a weed. We need to surround ourselves with the wise and godly because the stakes are different. As you continue to grow, the cost is different. Everyone wants to be a part of the harvest. People aren't drawn to seeds; they are drawn to harvest, influence, flowers. We need to ask God to give us a new discernment and anointing we need to move forward and take new ground.

## **CHALLENGE**

To continue to develop the leadership within you, listen to our leadership talk by searching Shoreline City Leadership Talks wherever you listen to podcasts!

## **PRAYER**

FATHER, THIS YEAR, GRANT ME A NEW LEVEL OF DISCERNMENT. ILLUMINATE THE ASPECTS OF MY LIFE THAT HAVE MASQUERADED AS WHEAT, BUT ARE, IN FACT, WEEDS. HELP ME TO EMBODY WHEAT AND NOT BE A WEED IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS. BESTOW UPON ME A HEIGHTENED LEVEL OF MATURITY TO HARVEST A LIFE-GIVING BOUNTY THROUGH MY WORDS, ACTIONS, AND RELATIONSHIPS. GRANT ME THE VISION TO SEE AND THE WISDOM TO HEAR THE TRUTH UNDERLYING WHAT IS SAID AND DONE. GUIDE ME TO BELIEVE THE BEST AND TO BE A CATALYST FOR CHANGE.  
IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.

# *new* PEACE

*“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” (John 14:17)*

**Jesus shared with** His disciples the events that were about to unfold. He wanted to ensure they were not afraid so He told them He was leaving them **HIS** peace. The word “peace” we often hear people use is not a Biblical peace. They are referring to a feeling when there is an absence of conflict or trouble. This peace is dictated by our external environment, it is fickle and fleeting. This peace is not consistent nor stable.

What’s interesting about this verse, is Jesus shared this knowing they were about to face nothing but conflict and trouble. The peace Jesus was talking about can only be found in Him. It keeps us anchored when the world around us feels like it’s falling apart. This peace can’t be stolen, it’s not changed by what our eyes see.

The chaos may happen around us but His peace ensures it doesn’t happen in us.

Jesus promises that, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” We find peace in who He is and what He did for us, we are reminded of it in the testimonies of those around us who have walked through the fire and came out the other side not smelling like smoke. This peace keeps us focused, engaged, unwavering and hopeful, and in the midst of trouble you can continue to praise Jesus and proclaim His goodness and faithfulness.

It’s possible to cry because you are experiencing a painful season, and still have peace. It’s possible to have questions, and still have peace. It’s possible to be frustrated, and still have peace. It’s possible to experience a loss, and still have peace. It’s possible to have a human moment, and still have peace.

One of the names Jesus is called is the “Prince of Peace.” He isn’t called that because He immediately makes circumstances “feel good”

rather He is called that because by Him being our savior we have a confidence that no matter what happens, He is with us, He is for us, He doesn't leave us nor forsake us, He fights battles on our behalf, He will provide and He can do the impossible.

This year, exchange the world's definition of peace for the new peace that can only be found in Jesus.

## ***PRAYER***

FATHER, I ASK THAT YOU EXCHANGE MY UNDERSTANDING OF PEACE FOR THE PEACE THAT COMES FROM BEING ONE WITH CHRIST. MAY PEACE BE AN ANCHOR THAT HOLDS ME IN PLACE WHEN THE STORMS RAGE AROUND ME. PROTECT MY HEART FROM TAKING ON FEAR AND ANXIETY, SILENCE VOICES THAT ARE TELLING ME YOU WON'T COME THROUGH FOR ME. CONTINUE TO SHOW ME THE MOMENTS I AM NOT ROOTED IN PEACE, WHEN THINGS SEEM CHAOTIC LEAD ME BY STILL WATERS AND PROVIDE ME REST FOR MY SOUL. MAY MY PEACE BE CONTAGIOUS AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE WITH OTHERS WHERE THIS PEACE COMES FROM. IN JESUS' NAME. AMEN.

*new*

# LEADERSHIP

*Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." (John 8:12)*

**In the world today** we are given so many options.

Many options that look right and give the illusion of truth but underneath is deception and darkness. Our ears have grown accustomed to the voice of the world, a voice that leads and guides, dictates, corrects, teaches and trains. However, when we follow Christ and read His word we begin to realize the voice of the world sounds "off." At first we can't put our finger on it, but it doesn't sit right. As we continue to spend time with the Lord and His people we will begin to tell quickly when the enemy is speaking and not Jesus.

When Jesus came He lead people in a way that was contrary to how the religious leaders and even the secular leaders would govern the people. He came with grace and truth, extending grace and mercy to people but not allowing them to live in a state of deception because He would show them truth in a loving way. In His kindness He would reveal the paths people were on that didn't lead them to life. This made the leaders of that time angry because they were losing the control they had on the people, because their mode of leadership was through the Law and through fear.

Jesus brought light, He exposed darkness even in the places like the church who claimed they were doing God's will but strayed far from God's intended purpose of the church. When we say "yes" to Jesus, we are saying yes to His leadership.

The world is fighting to lead and guide us, it uses fear and manipulation to get our attention. When we lean into Jesus and give Him permission to lead us and guide us, the cares of this world are no longer overwhelming. In fact, when we look at the events of our times and filter them through

the lens of the gospel, we don't allow chaos and conflict to bring division into our hearts and relationships. We are willing to agree to disagree because we know how vital unity is to the health of the Church.

His leadership shows us how to extend love and mercy to those around us and to live our lives with grace and truth. When we find ourselves in seasons that seem confusing and concerning, we can find peace knowing we follow a leader who has His kids in mind, He has a plan that's good and gives us a hope and a future. We can trust Him because He loves us.

## ***PRAYER***

FATHER, THANK YOU FOR PROVIDING ME WITH A LEADER WHO IS FOR ME. HELP ME TO FOLLOW HIM WITH EASE, HELP ME KEEP MY ATTENTION FIXED ON HIM. WHEN I FEEL LIKE THE WORLD IS CHAOTIC HELP ME TO SEE YOUR WAYS AND YOUR FINGERPRINT IN THE MIDST OF IT. THANK YOU THAT YOUR PLANS FOR ME ARE GOOD, THAT YOU HAVE CREATED A FUTURE FOR ME THAT IS GOOD, THAT YOUR THOUGHTS TOWARDS ME ARE GOOD. WOULD YOU LEAD AND GUIDE ME THIS YEAR IN ALL THAT I DO. IN JESUS' NAME, AMEN.



# *new* GIFT

*“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” (John 14:26)*

**The Godhead is made** of: God the Father, the Son (Jesus), and Holy Spirit (this is also referred to as the Trinity). We hear so much about God the Father and Jesus but unfortunately, the Holy Spirit has received a bad rap because we kind of made him weird. The Holy Spirit is anything but weird. Before Jesus was crucified He promised an advocate, a Spirit of Truth, would come and be with them. He was promising them a new gift.

The Holy Spirit arrived on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 and activated new gifts in the disciples to aid them in spreading the gospel.

The Holy Spirit fills those of us who have surrendered our lives to Jesus. He guides, speaks, hears, reveals and glorifies (John 16:13-14). These attributes of the Holy Spirit will lead us in our spiritual development and bearing the “Fruit of the Spirit” (Galatians 5: 22-23).

He empowers us to love God and love people.

With the Holy Spirit comes unique gifts, but not all of God’s people receive the same gifts. This is intentional to build a whole and well rounded church and there is no one gift that is better than the other, they are all necessary to bring heaven to earth. 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 gives us a list of different gifts that some people may have. Wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of Spirits, different tongues, interpretation of tongues. These gifts are all meant to be used to build the church, not cause confusion or division. However, if these gifts are used without love being the motivation, then they are nothing more than party tricks. When these gifts are used without love and order, that is when it becomes weird.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God living in us, leading us, developing us, bringing order back into a chaotic world, working our sinful nature out of us, transforming us into the men and women we have been created to be. This is a gift Jesus left to us, a gift with power and authority. The Spirit of God raised Christ from the dead and the Spirit of God now lives on the inside of us. With His Spirit we are called to build the church, spread the gospel and tear down the gates of hell. With His Spirit we do not cower in the face of darkness we commend it to flee, with His Spirit we are empowered to make wrong things right, with His Spirit we can call on the Name of Jesus and whatever we ask shall be done. "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." (Ephesians 3:20-21)

## ***PRAYER***

HOLY SPIRIT I INVITE YOU TO FILL ME UP TO OVERFLOW. EMPOWER ME TO BE THE (MAN/WOMAN) YOU HAVE CREATED ME TO BE AND DEVELOP THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT IN MY LIFE. TRANSFORM ME FROM THE INSIDE OUT. WORK THROUGH ME WITH POWER AND MIGHT, EMBOLDEN ME TO BRING HEAVEN TO EARTH IN NEW AND POWERFUL WAYS. MAY MY LIFE BE A REFLECTION OF YOUR PRESENCE, MAY IT BRING YOU GLORY. IN JESUS' NAME. AMEN.

# *new* VESSEL

*“And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins.” (Luke 5:37-38)*

**As we continue to develop over the year, God is wanting to do a “new thing,” and for this “new thing,” we will need to be a new vessel for Him to work in and through. When Jesus shared this parable with the crowd, he referred to pouring new wine into an old wineskin.**

Wineskins were made from the skin of goats or other animals and sewn together. A new wineskin could accommodate the wine and the gases created through the fermentation process. Pouring new wine into an old wineskin was not feasible because the wineskin would shrink as it dried out and would no longer be able to expand to hold the wine and the gases it created, leading to its bursting, destroying both the wine and the wineskin.

God wants to pour something new into our lives, and for us to receive it and all that comes with it, we must ensure we are in a position to not break under it. Some of us have been living our lives like an old wineskin, praying for change or something new, but we are not in a condition to receive it, as it would cause more harm than good.

Perhaps you are praying for God to do a new thing in your finances, but you have yet to master the art of budgeting. Maybe you are praying for an increase in friendships but don't make yourself available or vulnerable enough to forge deeper friendships. Perhaps you are praying for a new thing in your career, but you are doing the bare minimum, not showcasing what you are truly capable of and can be trusted with. When we pray for more, we must have the discipline and capacity for what comes with the “more.” Where

there is an increase, there is also increased responsibility.

One of the 12 stones is “we lead like champions.” Leadership occurs in all places at all times, not just when others answer to us or when we are in the public eye. It demands us to be willing to change and transform, to adapt, to become less so Jesus can become more, to sacrifice, and to do the right thing even when no one is looking. We believe we are all called to be leaders, and we don’t lead from a place of lack but from a place of victory. This means we need to step into the leadership role with new authority and as a new vessel.

God has significant things He wants to do in our lives and is calling us higher. We want to be ready and available for what He is going to do this year, laying down the old and picking up the new.

## ***PRAYER***

FATHER, THANK YOU FOR WANTING TO DO A NEW THING IN MY LIFE AND IN THE LIVES OF THOSE AROUND ME. I ASK THAT YOU WOULD SHOW ME THE AREAS IN MY LIFE WHERE I HAVE BEEN LIVING IN A STATE OF “OLD” AND NEED TO EXCHANGE IT FOR THE “NEW.” GIVE ME EYES TO SEE MYSELF AS A LEADER WHEREVER I GO OR WHATEVER I DO, SO I CAN BE USED TO CHANGE ANY SPHERE OF INFLUENCE I HAVE. PREPARE ME FOR WHAT YOU HAVE FOR ME THIS YEAR. I AM BELIEVING FOR INCREASE; MAKE ME A NEW VESSEL YOU CAN WORK THROUGH THIS YEAR. IN JESUS’ NAME, AMEN.

# *new* MANDATE

*“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)*

**Jesus shared these words** with his disciples while they were gathered together after the resurrection. It was a command to now expand, to share with all people in all nations. It was a command build His church. After all Jesus taught them, it makes sense for this mandate to be shared with them as their “next steps” but how do we fit into it? Most of us aren’t in full time ministry so how do we put this mandate into practice in our lives?

Pastor Earl has shared being passionate about raising up Christ like leaders. That means we fight to become more like Christ, and out of that we are intentional to lead like Jesus led, to make disciples by the lives we live, as Jesus is lifted up in our lives all men are drawn to Him.

When we live our lives according to His Word, pursue righteousness, turn away from evil, when we are humble, honest, kind and patient, when we do the right thing when the world is chasing the wrong thing Jesus is lifted up, and the world takes notice. We aren’t called to act like the world, we are called to act like Christ. When we are consistent we become a lighthouse for people seeking light. Doors to share why we act the way we act will open and we can share about a Savior who took us from darkness and brought us into the light, a Shepherd who found us when we were lost, a Father who celebrated with all of Heaven when we came home. We will have opportunities to invite them to church or a connect group.

We are not here to build our empires we are here to build His church, once our lives are surrendered to Christ we are given a new mandate, a new mission. As we continue to grow and mature in our faith we need to stay committed to

pray for those who are searching for answers, desperate for a change, hungry for peace because you will be the one God will use to lead someone to the cross. May our eyes stay open and our spirits stay awake, looking for God's sons and daughters who are trying to make their way home.

As we end this time of prayer and fasting, do not let this be the conclusion to your growth, let this only be the foundation you will continue to build on. There is a broken and hurting world who needs faithful stewards willing to become less so Christ can become more. We do not have the power to save people, but we have the Holy Spirit who will lead us, a Savior who paid their debt on the cross and a Father who loves them and wants them where they belong. God generously allows us to play a part in His story, to make it on earth as it is in heaven, and He is giving us the mandate to, "go and make disciples of all nations."

## ***CHALLENGE***

If you have not yet become an owner at Shoreline City you can do that by going through JOIN (text "JOIN" to 73000). If you have been sitting on the sidelines, we encourage you to join a serve team. This can be one step towards building God's church.

## ***PRAYER***

FATHER, THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING ME TO PLAY A PART IN MAKING IT ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN. I ASK THAT YOU WILL CONTINUE TO DO A WORK IN AND THROUGH ME, THAT I MAY LIVE A LIFE PLEASING TO YOU. THAT I WOULD LIFT YOU UP IN ALL THAT I DO SO MEN WOULD BE DRAWN TO YOU THROUGH MY LIFE. WOULD YOU GIVE ME EYES TO SEE THE HURTING, THE SEEKING AND THE BROKE. GIVE ME THE BOLDNESS TO INVITE THEM TO CHURCH OR A CONNECT GROUP, GIVE ME THE CONFIDENCE TO SHARE WITH THEM HOW YOU HAVE CHANGED AND TRANSFORMED MY LIFE. LEAD AND GUIDE ME SO I MAY BE A VESSEL FOR YOUTH WORK THROUGH AND MAY I HELP IN MAKING DISCIPLES EVERYWHERE I GO. IN JESUS' NAME. AMEN.