

## My Prayer Journal

*Use this weekly prayer to help you begin your time with God each day.*

### Prayer of Confession:

If we say we are completely put together, the truth is not in us. But if we confess our distractions, our errors, and our anxieties, God will meet us and renew us. People: Before God and God's people, I confess that I have been reluctant to speak out clearly, naming the injustice I see and declaring God's vision. Before God and one another, I confess my reluctance to receive my calling as God's own child, made by God and chosen as a witness to God's dream of justice and joy. Remind me, God, that you have made me for Your service and recharge me with Your Word. Renew me, God. Grant me courage to live out Your way of peace and grace. I ask it in Jesus' Name. Amen.

### My Prayers this Week:

#### Family Time:

This week following Easter we can take time to reflect on how Jesus' life has impacted our own. We are His disciples no matter our age. We are called to be followers of Christ and when we allow ourselves to honor that and truly walk in the presence of the Lord, we can know our impact. Have a conversation with your kids and talk about the importance of walking in Jesus' path and how His grace covers our sins. For the younger ones in the family, express to them the important impact they have on the family and how that relates to all of us having an impact in the Kingdom of God.

### MONDAY 4.5.21

### Mark 16:1-8

In this week after Easter Sunday, we will spend time each day reading accounts of the resurrection, and subsequent resurrection appearances, from each of the four Gospels, beginning with the short account from Mark. Most scholars believe Mark's Gospel was the earliest one written, and that Matthew and Luke used it as a source, augmenting it with other information known to them. Most people are surprised that in this early account, the women who encounter the angel at the empty tomb leave, terrified, without saying a word to anyone about it. But the astute reader knows that the risen Christ WILL appear to His disciples in Galilee, because the angel has said so, and divine predictions have always come to pass in Mark's Gospel. Remember that all of Jesus' early ministry had taken place in and around Galilee—so the implication of Jesus meeting His disciples there post-resurrection is that the ministry of proclaiming and advancing the Kingdom, that was broken off for the journey to Jerusalem, will now resume! In Mark, after Jesus' death, it is presumed that the disciples headed back home, dejected ... only to find their resurrected master waiting for them in Galilee!

- Has fear ever paralyzed you into inactivity and silence?

### TUESDAY 4.6.21

### Matthew 28:1-10

Matthew adds details to the story of the discovery of the empty tomb that Mark does not have. We are told that the rolling away of the stone from the tomb has been accomplished by an angel of the Lord, and has caused an earthquake. Rather than a young man inside the tomb wearing a white robe, Matthew tells us that this was actually an angel, sitting atop the stone, with an appearance like lightning and clothes as white as snow. The angel's words are quite similar to those recorded by Mark, but when the women leave, they are immediately obedient to the angel, and run to tell the disciples. On the way, they encounter Jesus, who reiterates the angel's command for the disciples, who He calls "my brothers," to go to Galilee. None of the Gospels actually attempts to describe the moment of the Resurrection itself. Events surrounding it are reported, but the actual transformation that happens at the Resurrection is not, implying that the Resurrection itself is intended by God to remain a mystery. We are able to grasp the FACT of the Resurrection, but we don't have enough information in Scripture to understand the nature of the PROCESS of resurrection.

- How do Matthew's additions affect the story? Do you think the risen Jesus' meeting the women impacted their actions?

### WEDNESDAY 4.7.21

### Matthew 28:11-20

Matthew adds two stories in the aftermath of the discovery of the empty tomb. First, there is a short disclaimer about the rumor, still rampant in Matthew's day, that the disciples stole Jesus' body while guards were asleep. Second, Matthew gives us the story of what actually happened when the resurrected Jesus met the eleven disciples in Galilee. Reiterating the theme of Jesus' "authority" that is prevalent throughout all the Gospels, Jesus issues what became known as the "Great Commission," telling the disciples to "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." As we saw on Monday, in Mark, the purpose of reuniting the disciples in Galilee is so that they can continue the mission and ministry that Jesus had begun with them there. Now, in Matthew, we see Jesus issuing a command demonstrating what that ministry should look like—initiating people into membership in this Kingdom movement through Triune baptism, and then continuing to teach them about life in the Kingdom of God, in the same way Jesus had taught them.

- How does the Great Commission impact your discipleship?

### THURSDAY 4.8.21

### Luke 24:1-35

Luke's story of the discovery of the tomb is even more detailed than Matthew's, but also slightly different. As in Mark, no earthquake is described, but unlike in Mark, not just one, but two men are inside the tomb when the women arrive. Although they are not called "angels" as in Matthew, but "men" as in Mark, they do have gleaming clothing as Matthew described. The angel does not tell them to have the disciples go to Galilee to meet Jesus, perhaps because in Luke's account the disciples stay in and around Jerusalem until Jesus' ascension. Luke also names the specific women who went to the tomb - but rather than a resurrection appearance to the women, Luke describes how the disciples rejected the women's testimony, with Peter running back to find the empty tomb. Luke is the only Gospel to then follow this up with the story of Jesus' encounter with two followers on the road to Emmaus. In their testimony back to the eleven disciples, they (and we) learn that Jesus has also appeared to Simon (Peter). Surprisingly, we are not given the story of that encounter itself, but we will read tomorrow about Jesus' appearance to all the disciples—and His request that they STAY in Jerusalem for a time.

- What insights are gained from the road to Emmaus story?

