

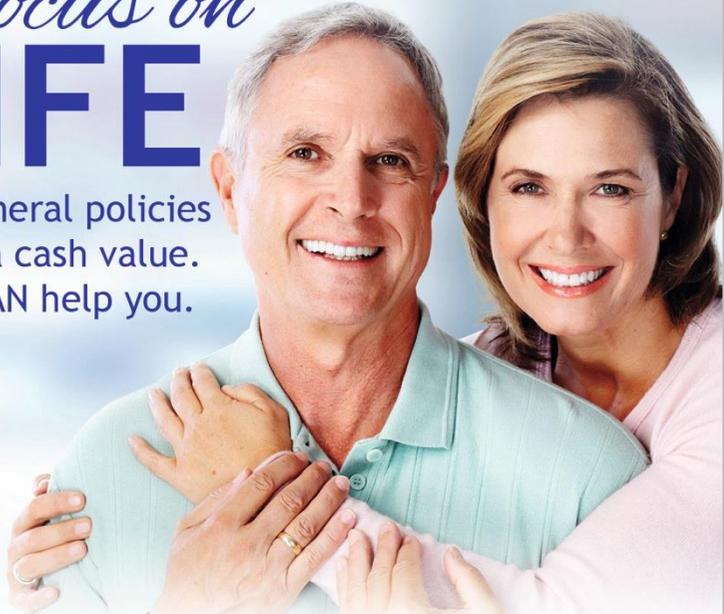
Daily Devotional

Booklet



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RESURRECTION STORIES

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JESUS RAISES A WIDOW'S SON AT NAIN	Page 08	3 October 2021
JESUS RAISES JARIUS' DAUGHTER	Page 15	10 October 2021
RAISING OF TABITHA	Page 22	17 October 2021

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FRUITS OF GENEROSITY & RIGHTEOUSNESS: DAY ONE

Read 2 Kings 4:19:

And he said to his father, “My head, my head.” And he said to a servant, “Carry him to his mother.”

This a story of faith and God’s miracle, because in the previous passages in this very same chapter – Elisha, the prophet, met this Shunammite woman who was not just generous but filled with righteousness.

This Shunammite would have lost her dignity in the community as she could not conceive. However, her genuine care and compassion towards strangers has in a way redeemed her dignity when Elisha declared resurrection for her life that was surely deemed to be barren when it comes to her womb.

This woman was such a strange, wealthy person who was content with all she had. Even though she didn’t have one of the social identities that women in those days relied on. The identity of a child, a son. She once lacked this, yet it never made her unkind.

Now that the son of the Shunammite is suffering and dying – his father, who witnessed the power of the prophet of God, whom his wife treated with favour and care, sends a servant to his wife with his sick son. This is profound, this man probably knew that his wife had exceptional faith in God who from the start gave them a son.

The Shunammite’s generosity and righteousness shaped her faith and opened the heart of God, she was blessed with a son in her barrenness. Therefore, the only place for the sick and dying son, is at the mother’s bosom to surrender him to God’s prophet.

In your suffering and dying state, who is your Shunammite lady? In other words, who do you share your pain with or to whom do you send your troubles?

Prayer: Dear Lord, sometimes we fail to acknowledge your power that you have imparted to others. Help us therefore, to see and acknowledge the prophets you have given to us for the sake of Your Name. Amen!

PLACE YOUR TROUBLES UNTO GOD: DAY TWO

Read Luke 7:20-21

“Now when he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees until noon. And then he died. Then she went and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door on him and went out.”

This Shunammite woman remembered that when her womb was barren, Elisha declared it opened and she gave birth to a son. This son has now died. Therefore, the only place she can go to is supposed to be the one who gives life and only God through the prophet has the divine power to bring her son to life.

She placed her son in the same room that she had previously built for Elisha in their home. Like a true image of placing our sorrows on God’s altar. In the ancient times, the place of a prophet was considered the place where God would reside. Hence, this woman places her son in Elisha’s room.

Sometimes, when we are troubled in life, we tend to go to the wrong people and places with our pain. This Shunammite woman went into the room of Elisha and ran to Elisha afterwards to ensure that he brings again the resurrection into her life by raising her son. Elisha previously resurrected this woman’s dignity and so brought her life through her son’s birth, now she does not doubt that Elisha can bring her son back from the dead.

Have you ever experienced a resurrection (bringing back into fullness of life, what was dead/lost) in your life? How did it happen?

Who is the source of resurrection for us (including you) and why?

Prayer: Creator of heaven and earth, help us always to place our trust in you with all that we have Amen.

WOMAN AND THE HOPE OF A SON: DAY THREE

Read: 2 Kings 4:14-17

“What can be done for her?” Elisha asked.

Gehazi said, “She has no son, and her husband is old.”

Then Elisha said, “Call her.” So, he called her, and she stood in the doorway. “About this time next year,” Elisha said, “You will hold a son in your arms”.

“No, my lord!” she objected. “Please, man of God, don’t mislead your servant!”

But the woman became pregnant, and the next year about that same time she gave birth to a son, just as Elisha had told her.”

What is it about this Women that would make Elisha feel indebted? Maybe even perhaps a little anxious and now he feels a need to reciprocate? We read together that Elisha offers to help her and have a word on her behalf with the King or the commander of the army and gain her favour with them. However, she refuses his offer. Now because of this refusal, Elisha is now on the back foot and so he increases his offer, offering her something that she and her husband have been denied, but she has not asked him for; he promises her a son.

The woman’s response is to doubt Elisha- she does not believe that this gift is possible and challenges him not to deceive her. By having a son this would mean that her future would be secured. A son would be an heir to her husband’s wealth and land, I would even go as far as to say that her status in the community would be elevated even more than what it already is.

Friends, I am sure that she had prayed many prayers asking God to bless her with a son! Elisha in this moment is offering hope that is unexpected, a hope that is beyond comprehension, and sure enough, a year later she has a son.

Prayer: O God who hears the prayers of our heart, we long for “Resurrection Moments” in our lives. Awaken us to notice new life and your answer to prayer. Amen

TRUSTING GOD: DAY FOUR

Reading: 2 Kings 4:24-25

“She saddled the donkey and said to her servant, “Lead on; don’t slow down for me unless I tell you.” So she set out and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel. When he saw her in the distance, the man of God said to his servant Gehazi, “Look! There’s the Shunammite! Run to meet her and ask her, ‘Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is your child all right?’ “Everything is all right,” she said. The woman said, “It is well.”

What if this story was our story?

What would have been our response when asked the same question?

Friends, have you lost anything lately? Perhaps a loved one, a career, a business, a marriage, a child, a home, your health?

Did you run to you seek out God your comforter?

Where you able to say “It is well?”

I don’t know what the woman was thinking, I don’t know what you are thinking, but in this “Resurrection Story” I see the Women’s absolute faith and hope.

She came to the one who she believed could do something about her problem. Her faith was able to say, “It is well,” even though her circumstances said otherwise.

This is our story, too. It is the story of the ages. It is the story of God. The story of our faith in God. People of faith have had troubles and trials throughout history.

It is well not because of our strength, but because of God’s strength.

It is well not because our stories always work out the way we want, but because God works for our good. It is well not because the journey is easy, but because God is our guide.

Prayer: God our Father, we place our trust in you! Lead us, guide us, carry us through the hardships we face. Amen

OBEDIENCE: DAY FIVE

Reading: 2 Kings:4 -27-29

“When she reached the man of God at the mountain, she took hold of his feet. Gehazi came over to push her away, but the man of God said, “Leave her alone! She is in bitter distress, but the LORD has hidden it from me and has not told me why.”

“Did I ask you for a son, my lord?” she said. “Didn’t I tell you, ‘Don’t raise my hopes’?”

Elisha said to Gehazi, “Tuck your cloak into your belt, take my staff in your hand and run. Don’t greet anyone you meet, and if anyone greets you, do not answer. Lay my staff on the boy’s face.”

The woman came to Elisha after encountering his servant and in her distress, scripture tells us that she grabbed the prophet by the feet and reminded him of his promise to her for a son.

During this interaction, Elisha sent his servant to the dead boy. Gehazi was to take Elisha’s staff and hurry to the house, not stopping to talk to others or even acknowledging anyone along the way. Upon his arrival, Gehazi was to lay the staff on the face of the child. Gehazi didn’t waste any time. He was a man on a mission, and his purpose was straightforward. He had a task to complete.

But what if Gehazi had figured that the staff was unimportant and opted to visit with others or stopped to chat along the way?

Gehazi remained obedient! You and I are called to obey because God knows best. That old hymn lyrics is a wonderful reminder – “TRUST AND OBEY THERE IS NO OTHER WAY”

Friends, how are we doing when it comes to obeying God?

Prayer: O God, you ask us to trust and obey. Speak to us as we sit at your feet ABBA Father. Amen.

PRAYING FOR HEALING: DAY SIX

Reading: 2 Kings 4:32-35

“When Elisha reached the house, there was the boy lying dead on his couch. He went in, shut the door on the two of them and prayed to the LORD. Then he got on the bed and lay on the boy, mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, hands to hands. As he stretched himself out on him, the boy’s body grew warm. Elisha turned away and walked back and forth in the room and then got on the bed and stretched out on him once more. The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes. “

The woman refused to leave Elisha. She would not let go until this situation was solved.

So, Elisha followed her back to her home. Don’t you just love the faith and determination of this woman. She wasn’t satisfied that death was final and believed in the hope of the “Resurrection Story”.

As the woman and Elisha travelled home, they were met with devastating news. That the child had not woken.

Upon Elisha’s arrival, the child was still dead. When Elisha entered the room, he shut the door and prayed.

Friends, Elisha’s response was prayer! Prayer should be our first response, conversation with our source of hope and the author of Resurrection.

I can picture a weary, weeping woman outside the room, also praying. Crying out to God, praying for a breakthrough.

I have found myself in this place many times. I have prayed and cried with families seeking a breakthrough. I have stood outside theatre doors in hospitals and a covid ward praying for a breakthrough, a Resurrection story.

The deaths we face in our lives can be defied, relationships can be restored, careers can flourish again, employment can be successful, we can be healed mentally, spiritually, physically.

Prayer: Father God because of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ we can look to the cross and celebrate the ultimate “Resurrection Story”! Amen

GROUP NOTES

Welcome: Spend some time sharing a moment when you felt the pain of loss.

Worship: Take courage- Bethel

- **Word:** What area of your life feels barren right now?
- How does this story ignite your hope?
- When you have faced difficulty, how have you managed to keep your faith alive and trust in God?
- What does this story teach you about the power of prayer?

Read: 2 Kings 4:19

- **Work: Take a moment this week to lay down your burden of bareness at the altar of God.**

REALITY OF DEATH: DAY ONE

Read: Luke 7:12

“Now when He came near to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother. Now she was a widow. And a large crowd of the city was with her.”

Of all the gospel writers, Luke is the only one who documented the account of this particular miracle. Luke gives us the image of a funeral procession in verse 12 when he says, “there was a dead man carried out.” All of this happened as Jesus arrived in Nain (a city with big walls as its fence), but the body of this young man was being carried outside the city of Nain.

A funeral procession always represents a reality of death of a loved one. Sometimes, when we lose our loved ones – we get delayed accepting that our loved ones have passed on, but the funeral procession becomes an over-arching proof of death of a loved one.

Reading this story of this widow’s son, especially its first part – I get an assurance that at the heart of our mourning, Jesus is present with us even on our path to the cemetery.

Have you lost a loved one (family member, friend, colleague); and how have you responded to his/her death?

Have you ever struggled at any point in time with reality of the passing on of your loved one?

Prayer: Dear Lord, strengthen and be with your child now who is struggling to accept the death of their loved one(s). Jesus Christ ,Son of God help us who mourn to accept that, indeed, the Almighty God has called our loved ones into His highest office to rest from the things of this earth. Amen!

SORROW RECEIVES COMPASSION: DAY TWO

Read Luke 7: 13 “And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her.”

Truly, Jesus was 100% human and 100% divine because He felt the pains and trouble of the people who needed help in many forms. Just by reading verse 13 in this current Luke passage, you will get a clear sense that Jesus was moved by the pain of the widow. This widow now has no one to protect her, as a widow her dead son was the one she relied on as the only person who could provide for her (i.e. her source of income) and protect her from the community.

This widow was very vulnerable because of the death of her son. During the ancient times, any assets that would have been left by her husband would be under the care of her son. Now her son has just died and is getting buried. Therefore, Jesus understood very well that, this widow will have nothing and no one to protect her from being abused and she will lose any property that her son looked after.

Jesus’s compassion that he expressed went beyond sorrow because he knew that the son was in many ways a livelihood of the widow. Jesus showed a deep compassion for the passing on of Lazarus. He even wept, and it was probably the thought of how Martha and Mary would be treated by the community now that their brother has died (John 11:35).

His compassion came out of His love for the one who has died and the one left behind.

Have you ever experienced sorrow? How was the experienced?
Did anyone showed compassion to you **Or** have you ever shown compassion to someone else’s sorrow? (How was the experience?)

Prayer: Creator of heaven and earth, who is Our God , help us as your people to share compassion with all people. Amen.

WEEPING IS OVER: DAY THREE

Read Revelation 21:4 “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. And there will be no more death nor sorrow nor crying. Nor will there be any more pain, for the former things have passed away. ”

Thanks be to God through the vision of John that we have the sure hope that our weeping will be over because God continues to remain on His throne.

In the Luke 7:11-17 passage, Jesus Christ’s arrival ends the mourning. I speak from experience in many death experiences of my loved ones that, as soon as I get re-awareness in my soul and inner-being that Jesus is crying with me, I am comforted. In other words, when I realise in my mourning again that Jesus sees me when I cry. I feel at ease and lightened to the point that crying stops for me. In verse 13, the words from Jesus that says “Do not weep” are as if they are saying, woman stop crying because the author of life has arrived to wake up your son and comfort you.

When those who love us are not available or present when we lose a loved one (not necessarily physically present, but present in a multitude of ways), the weeping tends to last longer.

There is healing power when we receive support and love in difficult times.

Have you supported those who have lost their ones? If yes – how was it? If no - did you have any reasons for not supporting? Please reflect more on this.

Have you received healing from supporting others who mourn for their loved ones?

Prayer: Father God , enable us Your people to stop weeping for our loved ones at an appropriate time. Amen.

ENGAGE THE PAIN – “TOUCH THE COFFIN”: DAY FOUR

Read Matthew 28:17 – 20

“And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him. But some doubted. Then Jesus came near and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and disciple all the nations, baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. And, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Engaging with any kind of a pain is crucial for a journey of healing and recovery. It is always a gift to have the ability to mourn and yet face the pain. Jesus in this passage saw the funeral procession and the coffin with the body of a widow’s son – he touched the coffin. The touching of the coffin gives an indication that the one who is mourning is still in charge of how the pain shapes his/her future.

We know very well that Jesus Christ will bring the young man into the fullness of life as the one with the power to give life. So, the gift of engaging pain, in other words the consequences of not ignoring the pain are long lasting, in the sense that, one’s life is able to continue without being the slave of pain. We cannot process pain through ignoring it, only when we engage with pain can we begin to process it.

Maybe, you are experiencing pain of some sort for a long time now. How about approaching someone you trust and share your pain with them, share how it has affected you?

Like the disciples, Jesus commissioned them to do something and move away from being stacked in the experience of seeing Jesus crucified and buried. Instead, they must go and share the good news to the world that Jesus Christ has defeated death and its pain. Therefore, those who believe in Jesus should know the truth that whatever they are encountering will come to an end and what they should do, is continue trusting Jesus as the one who takes our pain away.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we celebrate You that our Lord, Our Saviour and Your Son Jesus Christ defeated death and even while He was on the cross in Calvary engaging the pain of crucifixion by pronouncing forgiveness to all. Help us Your people to have the will to engage the pain in us and in others by extending forgiveness to those who cause pain for others, now and forever more ! Amen .

ARISE FROM ALL BONDAGES: DAY FIVE

Read Luke 7: 14(b) "And He said, Young man, I say to you, arise".

Jesus utters these words to the young man to come into life from death, because He himself will arise from the grave of death. In fact, Jesus at this time he has brought into life and dignity so many people that His instruction to the young man to come back to life is not a new act of reviving life by Jesus.

The words of the Lord are so powerful that, the Words of the Lord are enough to bring life to us. You will also agree that in Genesis 1 from the account of creation, God spoke with His Word and everything and humankind came into existence and life.

After the resurrection of Jesus Christ from John 20, the Lord breathed His Spirit unto the disciples so that they may be able to speak words of life to those people who are bound in many forms.

I am convinced and convicted by the words of Jesus in Nain, again that – if you are experiencing any kind of bondage, hear these words of life for you now, “I say to you arise”. In other words, stand up and do not reside in the pain/death. Jesus instructed the young man to arise from the place of death.

As people of faith in God, we are not residents of the grave. Rather the grave is a place of our waiting for the words of Jesus to come to our ears telling us to arise into eternal life when we (and our loved ones) have left this earth!

The power of Resurrection from the bondages of life are already available to us, all we need to do is ask.

Prayer: God of mystery, God of light, God of life, God joy, You are Love and Unity! We give thanks to you for your desire for us to stand up from our places of bondage. Amen

BEGIN TO GLORIFY GOD: DAY SIX

Read Luke 7:16(b) “The fear came upon all. And they glorified God, saying, a great prophet has risen among us, and God has visited His people”.

The greatest form of expressing our thanks to the Lord for His ever-continuing act of creation is to glorify Him and offer our praises for Him alone.

We are people of reaction because we have been created from God’s love. Our Lord always reacts with love. Those of us who acknowledge Our Lord and Saviour as the reviver of life, have no choice but to react in fear of the magnificent divine power that creates and recreates by glorifying His Name.

The fear that we speak about here, is not the fear of punishment or death, but rather a deep reverence and respect. This deep reverence and respect means that we will do whatever is in our power to respond with love and action. This love and action will be expressed not only in the way we respond to God, but also in the way we respond to others as well. When we understand the resurrecting love of Christ, our lifestyles will speak of this resurrecting love as well.

Today, as you reflect on the passage and verse.16(b) – how have you glorified the Lord for all that He has done for you in the past 16 months?

Are you struggling to glorify God with your life and your possession?
What could be the reason?

Prayer: Dear Lord, forgive us for we have failed to glorify You enough in our lives though you never stopped to make us arise from our bondages (whether financial, spiritual, relational, career, etc..) of life. Enable us to glorify your Name, now and forevermore. Amen

GROUP NOTES: JESUS RAISES A WIDOW'S SON OF NAIN

Welcome: Open in prayer: Father, we thank you for being compassionate and caring towards us in times of need. Thank you for the gift of your holy spirit. We are grateful for your continued presence and comfort in our lives.

Worship: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmnOT5FgctE> – Worship songs

Word: Read: Luke: 7: 11 - 14

Work:

- Who was the book of Luke written for?
- What themes run through this book?
- What analogies can you draw from this story?
- What can we learn from this story?

RAISING OF TABITHA: DAY ONE

Read Acts 9:36-42

The passage regarding Tabitha (which in Greek is Dorcas) painted a lot of what she did as a woman, what she did for the people around and mostly painted the picture of her actions, her lifestyle, her way of taking care of community.

Tabitha comes across as a mother that carried the city of Joppa on her shoulders but the weight that comes with it did not stop her from being kind, being kind to those around her:

being kind to the rich,
being kind to the poor,
being kind to the widows,
being kind to the children and the woman.

Her kindness brings the gap that is between status and class together.
Her kindness changes lives around her.

The actions of kindness done by Tabitha, of sewing garments and tunics, helping the poor in ways we could only imagine, makes me wonder and question: How am I being kind to the people of different classes, different statuses, different background?

How am I helping the poor?

Kindness starts with a friendly greeting and ends of with a blessing.

Prayer: Dear Lord, teach me to be kind, compassionate like you Lord Jesus

RAISING OF TABITH: DAY TWO

Read Acts 9:36-42

What are you remembered for?

What will you be remembered by one day when you're gone?

It is such a difficult question to pose to someone, but maybe it is easier when we ask what would you like to be remembered for one day when you're gone?

Tabitha is remembered for her passion, her zeal of serving others. This passion allowed Tabitha to leave a legacy that is worth remembering. Her legacy is so beautiful and amazing that it is even recorded in the bible along with other beautiful encounters.

We need to strive to live a life that is worth living, a life that is well remembered, we do not only live for ourselves, but we must also live for others. Tabitha did exactly that, she lived for others. Though her words are not recorded I can imagine her saying beautiful words along with the works that she did.

When we are gone, we will be remembered too.

How we are remembered is up to us. We need to build relationships with others, fix our broken relationships, reconnect with our families so that we may be remembered for the works and words that are beautiful and worth leaving behind.

How would you like to be remembered when you are gone?

Prayer: Dear Lord guide me on your path, keep me on your path so that I can continue to serve you and others

RAISING OF TABITHA: DAY THREE

Read Acts 9:36-42

Prayer is such a beautiful and powerful element of the Christian life. Prayer is not to fulfil our own agendas, our own will, but it is to seek God's will through our prayers.

I am amazed about how Peter knelt down and prayed. My grandmother whom I always speak of and refer to quite often is a woman who introduced prayer time to my siblings and I, though when we were young we didn't really want to partake in the prayer time, we had to respect and honour her with this practice. The practice is everyday at 7pm we would go into her bedroom, light a candle, kneel down and pray, Even if it meant saying the Lord's prayer, or myself falling asleep while praying, it was a practice that grew and shaped us and we saw the fruits of those prayers. We experienced God's protection, healing, and provision when there was nothing. Even today my Grandmother still does this practice, she goes into her bedroom, lights a candle, kneels, and prays.

That is what prayer does, we even see it through the Bible. People were transformed and even when their circumstances didn't change, they were comforted and transformed. Where there was famine God provided, when people were sick, God healed people. Sins were forgiven, and the dead were brought back to life.

Prayer is very powerful and important in our different walks of life. Prayer is a lifestyle that helps us seek the will of God upon our lives. Prayer changes things.

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for making it possible for us to come to you in prayer.

RAISING OF TABITHA: DAY FOUR

Read Acts 9:36-42

Yesterday we looked at prayer and the power it carries. When we pray to God, God responds, God is at work. Whatever we ask, and whatever he does through us, God deserves the Glory.

After Peter prays for Tabitha, he is amazed by what God has done. Peter doesn't take the credit at all, he decides to call everyone, the widows, the people who were crying, to come and see what he presents to them which is Tabitha very well alive. As they saw the word spread among the people and the city of Joppa knew about what had happened and many of them believed in the Lord.

Whatever we do in our lives needs to bring glory to God, whatever we have faced, any trials and tribulations that we come across and we overcome them, all glory needs to be given to God.

Our lives in general need to display the beautiful Glory of God and how mighty and powerful he is.

Prayer: Dear Lord thank you for your grace, and through your grace I can experience freedom.

RAISING OF TABITHA: DAY FIVE

Read Acts 9:36-42

The life of Tabitha was the life of a true disciple. She showed tremendous passion and enthusiasm in the way that she followed the teachings of Jesus Christ. She painstakingly took care of others and had a deep compassion for others to the point that she showed kindness to everyone.

Tabitha's willingness to do good and to serve people in the name of the Kingdom of God, meant that she was used by God as a witness to many others. Her witness of the good news of the Kingdom of God was not limited to her words, but evident in her works as well.

When she died the people lost, not only a witness of the good news, but an experience of the good news of the love of Christ. I can imagine the celebration afterwards when she was brought back to life. Even this dying and resurrecting was testimony to the good news of the Kingdom of God.

We as Christ followers, as Christians, as the church, we have a chance to lead others to know of the grace of God. This is done through our daily living, through each day even when it's difficult and challenging.

As those who testify to the good news of the Kingdom of God we are called to show love to the community and be an example of love in the community. We need to be on the look out and be alerted to the needs that the community and people around us might need. We are then called to respond to these needs through prayer, and action.

Prayer: Dear Lord, teach me to be a disciple that is obedient like how Tabitha was.

RAISING OF TABITHA: DAY SIX

This past week we have focused on the story of Tabitha, under the theme Resurrection Stories – the raising of Tabitha. Today we will be praying. Praying to be a disciple that was as obedient as Tabitha and Peter.

Throughout the day pray, spend some time thinking, and spend some time in solitude.

Prayer is often not so much about the change in circumstances, rather it is about a change in our attitudes. It changes the way we respond to circumstances, challenges, and heartache. May we bring all of these to the God who hears us and transforms us, so that we too may be agents of the good news of the Kingdom of God.

Guidelines

- Pray for God to help you show kindness to those around you and to yourself.
- Pray for broken relationships, broken friendships, and disconnected families to be connected again and have peace.
- Pray for obedience.
- Pray for the poor.
- Pray for the widows.
- Pray for those who are hurting.
- Pray for the lonely ones.
- Pray for those who are in need.
- Pray for the ones who are depressed.
- Pray for the Job seekers.

Prayer: Lord in your mercy Hear our prayers.

Resurrection Stories – The raising of Tabitha

Welcome: This week spend some time seeking ways to share kindness and seeking ways to share compassion with one person a day.

Worship: Spend some time listening to “I surrender all”

Word: Read Acts 9:36-42

We are called to be disciples that offer our talents and gifts to help others who are in trouble, those who are in need, we are all called to be kind to one other and pray for one another especially during these difficult moments.

Work: This week spend some time looking for moments to live out and practice good works that promotes kindness, love, and grace, works that will lead people to God and them being aware of His Glory.

JESUS HEALS JAIRUS' DAUGHTER: DAY ONE

Hope when life hurts.

As I reflect on the story of the resurrection of Jairus' daughter found in Mark 5:21-43, I am moved by the gut-wrenching pain and desperation in the father as he urgently pleads with Jesus to come to his sick daughter's aid. *"Then a leader of the local synagogue, whose name was Jairus, arrived. When he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet, pleading fervently with him. "My little daughter is dying," he said. "Please come and lay your hands on her; heal her so she can live."-Mark 5:22-23.* What moves me more than the emotive scene of desperation and pain, is the father's ability to find hope in the midst of it! The father was not so overcome by grief and fear that he became paralysed by the moment, rather, he ran to the one in whom his hope lay! He knew that he was in the presence of the one who brings life and light to the dimmest of moments, so he retained a positive expectation in the future despite what his circumstances were dictating! He held on to hope when life hurt most! Hope is powerful. Hope is not feeble. Hope is not naive! Hope is a biblical truth and the only thing scripture ever tells us to be enslaved by! *"Return to your stronghold you prisoners of hope"- Zechariah 9:12.* Our anxieties and fears about the future are not meant to keep us captive, our Hope should! Our disappointment and dread are not meant to keep us captive, our hope should! The bible says hope is an anchor for the soul, so, hope is what keeps us steady and secure in the storms of life! Hope does not deny a storm's existence, it just denies it a place of influence! It is the driving force inside of us that moves us to run to Jesus when all we want to do is give up. Hope helps us change our perspective and see things from God's vantage point, and as we do, we are strengthened by the deep assurance, that the storm won't last forever because God has the final word. In this case, the final word was "Talitha kum", And the young girl was restored.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, when the pain of the present moment distorts my view, remind me there is always hope in you.

JESUS HEALS JAIRUS' DAUGHTER: DAY TWO

Our God is able.

One thing that strikes me about Jairus, is the very moment he saw Jesus, he knew exactly what He could do and didn't hesitate to ask Him to do it! *"Please come and lay your hands on her; heal her so she can live."*- Mark 5:23. I often find myself trying to find my own solutions, carry my own burdens and navigate through the dark alone. I have known the heaviness that comes from living this way! I am more like the other character in the reading this week. Right in the middle of the account of Jairus and his daughter, Jesus encounters the woman with the issue of blood who had been struggling for 12 years! She had searched everywhere for healing and given all she had, *"She had suffered a great deal from many doctors, and over the years she had spent everything she had to pay them, but she had gotten no better. In fact, she had gotten worse."*- Mark 5:26. Twelve years of trying to find her own solution, twelve years of pain and striving and searching ended abruptly in a single moment with Jesus! In Him lies the solution to any struggle and for us to find what our souls are longing for all we must do is reach out to Him, all we must do is ask. I am reminded of James words, *"you have not because you ask not"*-James 4:2. My prayer for you and for me is that much like the father, we may begin to understand the profound power of taking our request to Jesus in prayer. May we know that we need not struggle to forge our own way because our Jesus is the Good shepherd, longing to lead us down the best pathways of our life. May we know that when we are walking through a dark season, He is the light of the world able to illuminate the path before us. May we know that as we are overcome with the debilitating weight of grief and pain, He is the comforter for our souls. When we are weak and in need of nourishment, He is the bread of life. When we are discouraged, He is the encourager and when the burden is too heavy, He invites us toward Himself for rest.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, when the weight of the world is too heavy to carry, remind me to come to you and ask for help.

JESUS HEALS JAIRUS' DAUGHTER: DAY THREE

Decide what to do with disappointment.

Jairus displays incredible resolve at a moment in the story where he faces a crossroads. As Jesus and Jairus are making their way to his sick daughter, they are faced with a delay. The woman with the issue of blood touches Jesus and He stops to notice her and minister to her. While all this is happening, some messengers arrived from Jairus' home with some terrible news, *"They told him, 'Your daughter is dead. There's no use troubling the Teacher now.'"* -Mark 5:35 Can you imagine the emotion going through Jairus in that moment? Just when his hope was at its highest, reality came and knocked the wind out of him. I know if it had been me in his shoes, I would have felt an array of emotions. Despair for one, probably anger, thinking, if Jesus didn't stop to talk to the women maybe we would have got there on time, and most certainly, disappointment. We all know the pain of disappointment; when our expectations look nothing like reality, our hope begins to fade and grief for what may have been takes its place. When I have experienced disappointment, I have found myself choosing the path that the messengers offered Jairus, I give up. But Jesus offered Jairus an alternate path, *"Don't be afraid. Just have faith."* - Mark 5:36. It was good news for his daughter that Jairus took this path! In the face of disappointment, it's easier to give up and become despondent and walk away from our hopes and dreams, but Jesus calls us to a different path, the path of faith. When we choose this path, we may just realise a truth that Jairus experienced first-hand: When we face disappointment in God, it's usually because our expectations were too low, not too high. Jairus expected Jesus to simply heal His daughter, but Jesus planned on doing far more than that, and because of Jairus' decision to keep going, he had front row seats to one of the greatest miracles in the gospels, resurrection.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, in the face of disappointment, remind me that you are able to do more than I can hope for or imagine.

JESUS HEALS JAIRUS' DAUGHTER: DAY FOUR

Enduring faith

The thing I most admire about Jairus is not only that he chose faith in the face of disappointment, but that he kept choosing faith! I'm not sure if you noticed in the reading, but once Jairus made the courageous decision to have faith in Jesus (after being encouraged to give up and stop bothering him), things were not instantly rectified. They were not suddenly transported to the bedside of his daughter; they still had a journey to endure. With every step, Jairus had to choose to keep trusting and keep believing even though the circumstances and his own logic were shouting otherwise! Jairus found himself in the all too familiar place of discouragement, the space between the promise of God and its fulfilment, the space when what we see, feel and experience looks nothing like He said, and yet, he endured. He took step after step without wavering. He didn't allow the discouragement around him keep him from moving forward with Jesus. Once they reach Jairus' community, his faith was tested even more! Scripture describes the scene vividly: *"When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw much commotion and weeping and wailing."* - Mark 5:38. Everyone was already mourning her death, they had all given up, but not Jairus, His faith endured. Enduring faith is powerful. Jesus illustrates its power in his ministry! Once His disciple questioned him on why they were not able to heal a sick boy and Jesus' response was that *"you have too little faith"* - Mat 17:20. This statement has always troubled me, because Jesus goes on to say that if they had faith as small as a mustard seed, they could move mountains! I used to think, wow, the disciples must have had tiny faith! But then I found the significance buried in the original language of the text. When Jesus said, *"you have too 'little' faith"*, the original word for *little* referred to time and not size! Jesus is saying, your faith was too short, your prayer didn't work because you gave up too quickly. It's not large faith that moves mountains, but enduring faith.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, help me to walk by faith and not by sight.

JESUS HEALS JAIRUS' DAUGHTER: DAY FIVE

Choosing your narrator.

For us to steward the kind of enduring faith that Jairus displays, we need to decide what voices will be allowed to participate in our story. Had Jairus listened to the messengers or the crowd mourning outside his home, he would never have experienced resurrection life. His experience of resurrection was made possible by a decision to allow the voice of Jesus to direct his decisions instead of the crowd. He chose his narrator well. Jesus gives us some practical ways we can do this. The first thing Jesus did along the way was to be intentional about who would be allowed in the room with Him, *"Then Jesus stopped the crowd and wouldn't let anyone go with him except Peter, James, and John (the brother of James)."* One of the most important decisions we can make on our journey is to decide who can sit in the front seat with us. Not every critical voice is accurate and not every critical voice is necessary. We must make the intentional decision to select a handful of people who we trust to guide us, correct, encourage and hold us accountable because if we follow the lead of every opinion, we will never get anywhere and we will be overwhelmed with discouragement. *"I carry a small sheet of paper in my wallet that has written on it the names of people whose opinions of me matter. To be on that list, you have to love me for my strengths and struggles"* -Brene Brown. The next thing Jesus did was to replace the voice of discouragement with the truth of God, *"Why all this commotion and weeping? The child isn't dead; she's only asleep."*-Mark 5:39. For us to experience resurrection life we must fill our heart and mind with the truth that comes from the word of God. Lastly, Jesus silenced the mocking voices, *"The crowd laughed at him. But he made them all leave..."* When our biggest critic is the voice within, may we follow Jesus' example and do what the apostle Paul commands us to do, take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ.

Prayer: Lord, fill me with wisdom to decide who my narrator should be

JESUS HEALS JAIRUS' DAUGHTER: DAY SIX

Standing up

Ultimately, the one thing that is necessary for us to experience resurrection life is to decide we want it, and then to answer God's call to stand in it. When Jesus arrived at the little girl's bedside, his intention was for her to live! If it were not so, he wouldn't have made the journey. Even though it was His intention, he did not forcefully shake her and then put her on her feet, rather he invited her to stand, "*talitha koum*". Our God is not a God who forces His will on us. He is not a God who kicks down doors and barges in uninvited, He is a God who stands at the door and knocks and waits for us to hear the knocking and open the door! We see this truth unfold in many encounters in the gospels. We see it as Jesus asks the man who had been paralysed for 38 years a very profound question, '*do you want to be well?*'-John 5:4. God desires for our participation in His miracles- He desires a response to His invitation. It was this way in another famous resurrection story that takes place in John 11. Jesus' friend Lazarus had died, he had been dead for four days before Jesus arrived. Jesus was moved by emotion at His friends passing and then calls him to step out of His grave, "*When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!'*"- John 11:43. Lazarus had a role to play, he had to decide to step out of his grave. We all have graves, that is, areas in our lives that are prohibiting us from experiencing the abundant life Jesus has for us. These graves could be; bad patterns of thinking, unforgiveness, bitterness, addiction, abusive relationships, living a boundaryless life, busyness, lust, greed, pride, the list goes on. May we know today that it is Jesus' intention for us to find resurrection life in every area of our lives in need of revival. He desires for us to know peace and freedom and healing and life, if it were not so, he would not have journeyed to the cross. Just as with the girl, Jesus stands beside us asking us to respond. May we choose to stand. "*Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.*"- Isaiah 60:1

Prayer: Lord God, give me the courage to stand up and truly live.

Resurrection stories

Jesus heals Jairus' daughter

Worship: **Living hope- Bethel**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UgZGbeQnQb4>

Word: Zechariah 9:12; Mark 5:21-43, John 5:4.

Questions:

- 1- Why do you think hope is so important?
- 2- Have you ever experienced the power of prayer? Would you feel comfortable sharing your experience with the group?
- 3- What is your gut response when you face disappointment and why do you think disappointment is such a difficult thing to talk about?
- 4- Have you ever experienced the power of enduring faith? If so, share your testimony with the group if you feel comfortable.
- 5- Jesus gives us 3 practical ways we can choose our narrator in the story:
 - Be intentional about who you allow to speak into your life
 - Replace the discouraging voices with the truth of God's word
 - Silence the mocking voices by taking captive every thought and making it obedient with God.

Which one of these do you find the most helpful?



HOW TO KEEP IN TOUCH

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-  Service Times

Chapel: 7am & 5:30pm

Sanctuary: 8am, 10am & 6pm

Wesley Hall: 6pm (Youth)

Children's Church: 8am, 10am & 6pm



A group of people gathers regularly to take turns answering a single question. In 18th century English, Wesley asked, "How does your soul prosper?" or "How is it with your soul?" Today we might say, "How's your spiritual life?"

Take the message from the Sunday sermon into deeper learning by joining or forming a small group. If you do not belong to a group yet, you are welcome to sign up by contacting Nick (082 808 1452) or Ria (063 020 4639).