



JESUS AT
THE
CENTER

Time to Move
DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Welcome to 2025! I'm excited about what God has in store for you and our church. For some, 2024 was a great year. For others, it was a difficult one. No matter what, I'm convinced of one thing: it's time to move into a deeper spiritual life with Christ. Now is the time to dive deeper and throw off the restraints that keep us from the spiritual life God has for us. Whatever you want for your spiritual life, God wants more. Whatever we want for Brookwood, God wants more. Only God can change us, but we must be willing to seek Him. God won't simply give us character or discipline. We must make Him a priority.

Let's link arms this new year and move into what God has for us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'B' followed by a horizontal line and a cursive 'J'.

Bryan Jones
Senior Pastor

DAILY PRAYER AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

"... Our Father in heaven..."

Matthew 6:9b (NLT)

- **What do You want to say to me today as my Father?**

"... may Your name be kept holy."

Matthew 6:9c (NLT)

- **What do You want to reveal to me about Your power today?**

"May Your Kingdom come soon."

Matthew 6:10a (NLT)

- **Help me make Your priorities my priorities today.**

"Give us today the food we need,"

Matthew 6:11 (NLT)

- **Is there anything specific You want me to do with my time or the people I'm around today?**

"and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us"

Matthew 6:12 (NLT)

- **Reveal to me anyone I need to forgive or ask for forgiveness.**

"And don't let us yield to temptation..."

Matthew 6:13a (NLT)

- **Is there anywhere I'm vulnerable to temptation?**

MOVING ON

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:13-14 (NIV)

The Apostle Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians toward the end of his life. Based on what he'd been through, Paul could have easily given up. He had been severely beaten, pelted with stones, lost in the open sea, shipwrecked, persecuted by fellow Jews, thrown in prison and, in fact, wrote this letter while under house arrest. Yet, somehow, Paul pressed on. He found something worth giving his life to.

There are times when reflecting on the past can be very helpful. It's important to deal with our patterns of sin, to identify wounds we've suffered from the sins of others, and to learn from our mistakes. Yet, if we're not careful, we can spend so much time wrestling with the past that we fail to move forward. There's a difference between *redeeming* the past and *living* in the past.

We can walk more closely along God's path not only by reflecting on the past and seeking to live more fully in the present but also by focusing on the future. In today's Scripture, Paul provides for us a clear example of what it looks like to live the Christian life in a fallen world. He was not a prisoner of his past, but instead, he strained and pressed on to live the calling God had given him.

APPLICATION: Your life is a story, which means it has a past, a present and a future. Reflect on each of these aspects of your life today. Do you feel stuck? Have you been living in neutral? What do you need to leave behind? What have you been holding onto that's really been holding on to you? What motivations and desires has God placed in your heart? Talk with God about these things. Maybe it's time to move on.

PRAYER: God, You created me and know me. I believe You have good plans for me, and so I ask You to align my heart with Your will and Your ways. Reveal to me things about my past that need to be dealt with. Help me live in this present moment so I can experience all You have for me. And stir within me the drive and motivation to press on in my relationship with You and the calling You have on my life. Amen.

MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.

Proverbs 14:12 (NIV)

Whoever pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity and honor.

Proverbs 21:21 (NIV)

Today, let's immerse ourselves in the liberating truth that God's wisdom and guidance can transform the most tangled paths of our lives into straight roads that lead us to Him.

One of the central themes in Scripture is this idea of two paths. It seems there are often two different choices we can make, one that leads to life and the other to death. Adam and Eve could have chosen life, but instead, they made the choice that led to death and the fall of all mankind (Genesis 1-3). Abel chose the way of faithfulness, while his brother, Cain, chose the way of murder and deceit (Genesis 4). God gave the Israelites the choice between either life or death, prosperity or destruction (Deuteronomy 30). Jesus contrasted the wise and foolish builders (Matthew 7). There are literally hundreds of examples of people in the Bible who'd been given two different paths from which to choose.

Have you ever stopped and realized you'd been headed in the wrong direction? If you're driving in an unfamiliar town, in the dark, in the rain, this can be very frustrating! All of us, at one time or another, have said something like *I wish I could do that over again*. And thankfully, all of us, at one time or another, have chosen the right path. We've felt and seen outcomes from both scenarios. Let's pause more often and ask God for guidance and discernment so we can keep moving in the right direction.

You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending.

C. S. Lewis

APPLICATION: Pause and consider the direction of your life. Reflect on where you were a year ago, and imagine what life will be like a year from now if you either stay on the same path or decide to go a different route. Where are you headed? What direction do you want to go?

PRAYER: God, since You know what's ahead of me and the choices that are best for me, I ask You for help and guidance. I want to choose the path You have for me so I can move in the right direction. I ask You for wisdom and discernment and that I would hear Your voice leading me on. Amen.

MOVING ONE STEP AT A TIME

Your Word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.

Psalms 119:105 (NLT)

So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.

Matthew 6:34 (NLT)

I can remember times I looked so far down the road that I became overwhelmed by the big project in front of me or the entire next season of life. How daunting! Have you ever experienced that? One thing that's been really helpful for me (and relieving) is to break down the big picture into smaller parts and simply move one step at a time.

There are good reasons for not carrying the burden of the entire future on my shoulders. First, circumstances change. There are so many things out of my control. Second, my first step will likely lead to a better next step. I will learn things along the way. Third, where I thought I was going might not be where I was meant to end up, so dwelling on the future could easily take me off the right path.

Thankfully, there's another way. Today's Scripture reminds us that God gives us direction, most often one step at a time. His Word is a lamp and light for our path, not a spotlight on the whole journey! That's why the verse from Matthew above says the word *today* twice! You and I don't need to figure the whole thing out. What simple steps can you take today that you already know to take? If you're unsure, ask God. That's your best next step! And as the worries of tomorrow and all the troubles from the past come flooding in, may you take a moment to pause and remember that God often moves us one step at a time.

APPLICATION: As you go through this day, trust Jesus to provide the strength you need moment by moment. Don't waste energy wondering whether you are adequate for today's journey. Jesus' Spirit within you is more than sufficient to handle whatever this day may bring.

PRAYER: God, I confess to You that I often want to see further down the road than You want me to see. I like to have control and be in control. I release all that to You and ask You to fill me with Your peace and help me experience Your presence more continually today, one step at a time. Amen.

MOVING TOGETHER

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves.
Galatians 6:2-3 (NIV)

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts...
Acts 2:46 (NIV)

I was recently at a party for my father-in-law's 80th birthday. Several family members honored him as they took turns reading poems, telling stories and sharing with the group what he meant to them over the years. Don't get me wrong, there were 38 of us there, and it's not all been cookies and cream! Words have been said. Things have been done. None of our relationships have been flawless and without conflict. But as I looked around the room, it struck me the influence that not only he had in our lives, but also the impact we all had on each other. I stood there grateful for the extended family I was fortunate enough to marry into. Especially knowing that not everyone has had that same experienc.

God said, *it is not good for the man to be alone* (**Genesis 2:18a, NIV**). Somehow, even before the fall, God knew Adam would be better off with another human being around him. This theme of relationship and community is one of the major threads throughout Scripture. God's blessing to Abraham was not just for him. He was to be a blessing to the nations. Jacob had sons, who turned into tribes, who later represented a nation. Jesus' prayer in John 17 is about experiencing union with God and with each other. Today's Scriptures also describe the beauty and power of community.

If you want to run fast, run alone. If you want to run far, run together.

African Proverb

APPLICATION: Pause, close your eyes, and think of one person you care about. Hopefully, someone came to mind! What's one way you can strengthen that relationship? Whose burden will you help carry? Let's move forward together.

PRAYER: God, thank You for not only saving me from my sin but also giving me a place to belong. Thank You for never leaving me so I don't have to be alone. I know You've designed us to have healthy relationships. I pray You'll help us move forward together. Amen.

MOVING IN FAITH

"I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them."

Isaiah 42:16 (NIV)

If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, and the light around me will be night," even darkness is not dark to You, and the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to You.

Psalms 139:11-12 (NASB)

Driving through the mountains recently, we found ourselves in the middle of very dense fog. We could barely see the car in front of us. Headlights, bright lights nor taillights were able to pierce the thick gray that surrounded us. Several cars had pulled off to the side of the road. Then suddenly, after inching along for what felt like hours, the sun began to shine through. The heat of the sun's rays began burning up the clouds and fog. The reality is that the sun was there the whole time. We just couldn't see it.

Today's Scriptures come from the Old Testament and describe times when the people of God had been oppressed by enemies, taken captive, and left to wander in the desert. What I find comforting about these passages is that I can closely identify with the writers. I've been in darkness, not knowing which way was up or which way to go. I've experienced spiritual blindness, unable to see God's hand at work or even sense His presence. But I also love and appreciate the core truths of these passages: God leads us. Even though we can't always see, God can. Even though paths are unfamiliar to us, they are known to God. Even when we are overwhelmed, God hasn't left us. Darkness is nothing to God, and He promises to lead us the whole way through.

Today, may you take steps of faith that allow you to see the beautiful, glorious light of God. For even in darkness, you are never alone. Ever..

For we live by faith, not by sight.

2 Corinthians 5:7 (NIV)

APPLICATION: Has God been moving you to unfamiliar places? Is your faith being stretched? Meditate on today's Scriptures and ask God to help you move forward in faith.

PRAYER: God, today I give You everyone and everything. I give You my projects, my worries, the desires of my heart and the burdens of life. I give You all of it and ask You to lead me with Your light. I trust You with all that I have and all that I am. Amen.

MOVING WITH EXPECTATION

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...
1 Peter 1:3 (NIV)

Sometimes, when I sit at a red light, I hope the light doesn't turn green because I'm texting someone, checking the weather or looking for a song or podcast. But more often than not, when I'm stopped at a stop sign or red light, I'm anxious for the person in front of me to go. *Get moving!* It's the urge of leaning forward, ready to hit the gas. Can you relate? This is the feeling of expectation—to anticipate going somewhere with God that's so meaningful you can't wait for the light to turn green.

Today's Scripture was written to followers of Christ during a time of heavy persecution. Identifying with Christ cost many people their lives. Peter was encouraging his readers not to be overcome with fear or despair but to live with expectation, even in the midst of trial and suffering. No matter what you're going through, may you remember that by God's mercy, we have been given new life and a living hope. *These are things to celebrate!* And it is with this expectation we are able to move forward..

APPLICATION: Think of a time when you were so excited for something you *just couldn't wait!* Take yourself back to the moment, event or season. How did you feel? Put words to it. Now, consider what it would be like if you woke up every day with that same sense of anticipation and excitement. Ask God to fill you with the expectation that He's on the move, and you get to be a part of what He's doing.

PRAYER: Dear God, I pray the same Spirit who turned chaos into beauty at creation would move in my life so powerfully that I can't wait for what's next. Help me keep my eyes focused on You so I would live with an overwhelming sense of expectation to experience more of You and the life You have for me. Amen.



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