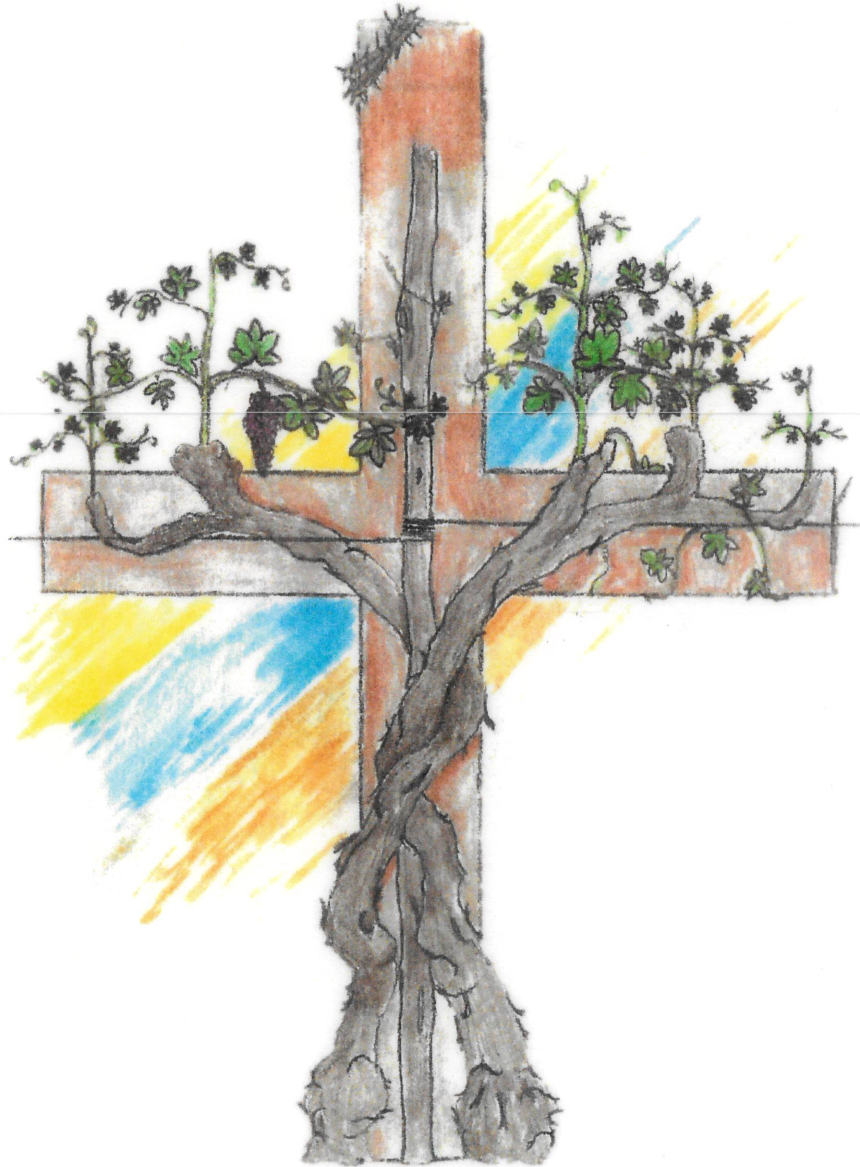


*Let Your Song Spring Up!*  
*The Cross, The Vine, and the Branches*



**SOLI DEO GLORIA**  
Christopher Hollingsworth

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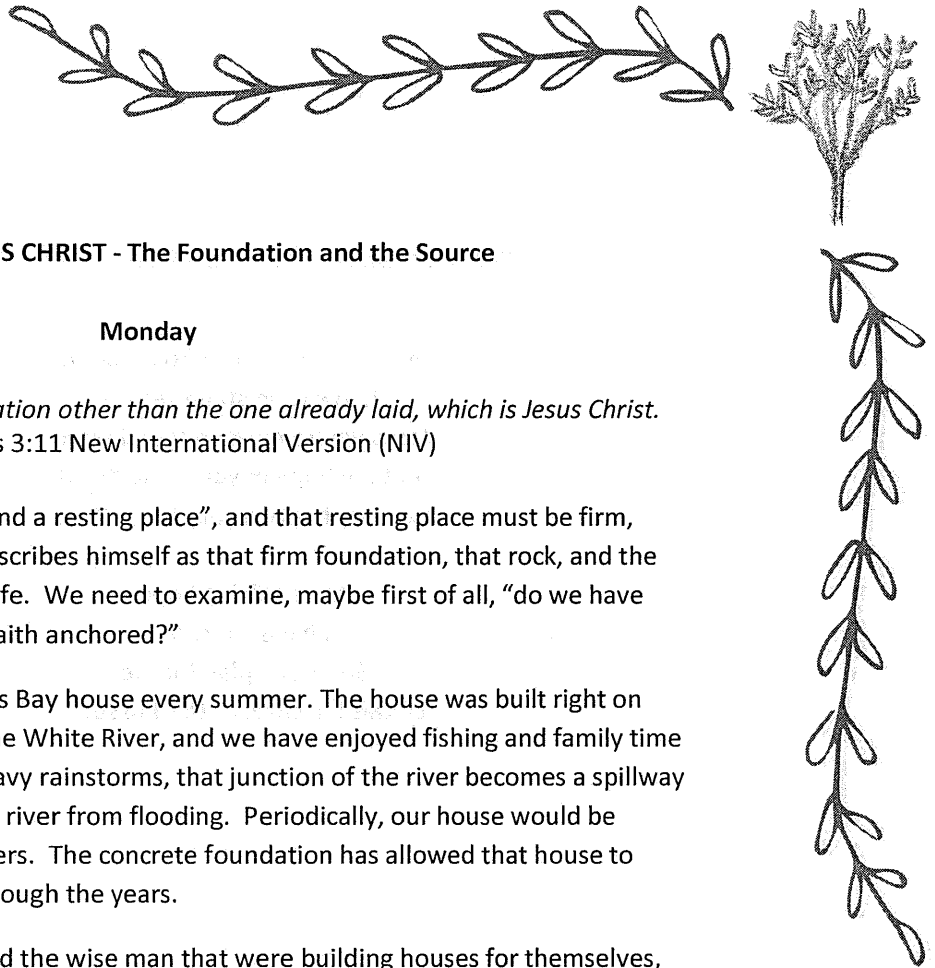
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## WEEK ONE – JESUS CHRIST - The Foundation and the Source

### Monday

**11** *For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.*  
1 Corinthians 3:11 New International Version (NIV)

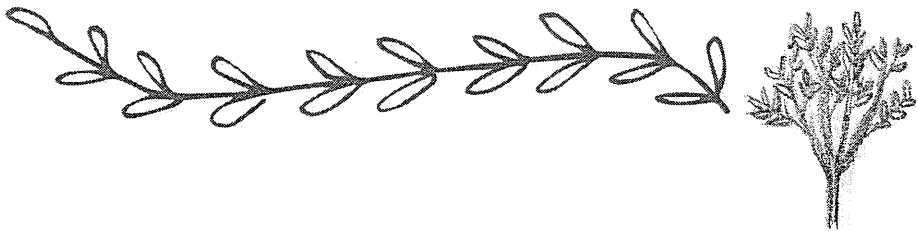
As the hymn says, our faith must “find a resting place”, and that resting place must be firm, secure, and eternal. Jesus Christ describes himself as that firm foundation, that rock, and the vine from which the branches find life. We need to examine, maybe first of all, “do we have faith?” and second, “where is that faith anchored?”

I grew up going to my Grandparent’s Bay house every summer. The house was built right on Maddox Bay, a seven-mile arm of the White River, and we have enjoyed fishing and family time there. However, when there are heavy rainstorms, that junction of the river becomes a spillway to protect the major portions of the river from flooding. Periodically, our house would be flooded as a result of the rising waters. The concrete foundation has allowed that house to withstand the floods and storms through the years.

In the parable of the foolish man and the wise man that were building houses for themselves, the foolish man built his house on sand. Jesus says the rains came and the storms beat upon that house, and it was swept away because of the unsteady, ever-shifting sand. The wise man built his house on rock, and when the wind, rains and storms came, it stood – because, Jesus said, it was built on a rock.

I can’t help thinking about the story of the “Three Little Pigs” who were busy building their houses to protect them from the “big bad wolf”. The first little pig built his house of straw, the second built his house of sticks, and the third built his house of bricks. The wolf came and blew on all three houses (wolves blow on their prey??), but only the house of bricks was left standing. Although that fun story is a children’s book, it is full of meaning, and often even makes adults stop to think.

Jesus has much to say about the foundation of our lives and what we build on that foundation. Only He has the building plans for our lives. The questions we must ask ourselves are: “Where does my trust lie?” “Who do I depend on?” “Is the foundation of my life the Solid Rock?” “Am I following the plans He has drawn up for me?”



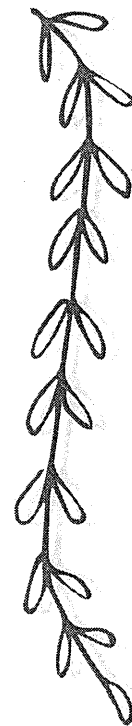
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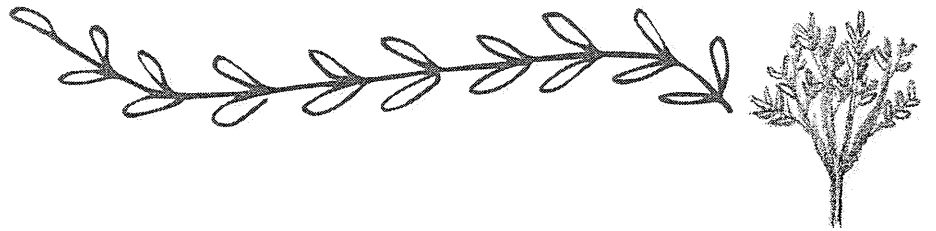
*5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*

John 15:5 (NIV)

**Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing** – Robert Robinson

O to grace how great a debtor  
daily I'm constrained to be.  
Let that grace now, like a fetter  
bind my wandering heart to thee.  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
Prone to leave the God I love.  
Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it,  
Seal it for thy courts above.





Thursday

<sup>24</sup> "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock."

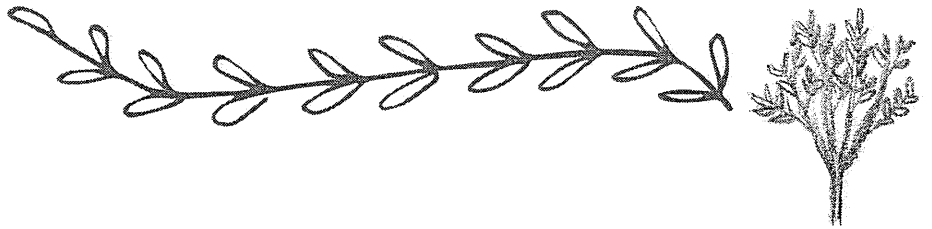
Matthew 7:24-25 (NIV)

**The Solid Rock** – Edward Mote

His oath, his covenant, his blood  
Support me in the whelming flood;  
When all around my soul gives way,  
He then is all my hope and stay.

On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.





## WEEK TWO – Who am I in Christ?

### Monday

*<sup>12</sup> Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.*

John 1:12 (NIV)

When we choose to believe and follow Christ, God adopts us. Through Christ we are adoptees! Historically, adoption has been considered legally binding to the adoptive parents, since they have *chosen* the child to become part of their family. I know this personally, as my parents “chose” me. I never fully understood the depth of their love and commitment until I myself had the calling and privilege to adopt my second son. The experience of adoption, of being convicted and called by God to raise, love, and care for a child, is beyond description. I feel certain that this love that I have for my son is only a small, very minute percentage of the love that God feels for all of us.

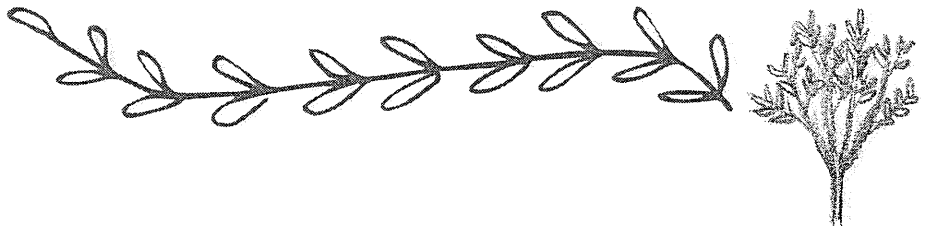
God continues to pursue even those who do not choose Him, with a righteous and mighty love that knows no bounds. However, he gives to each of us a choice, and it remains up to us what we decide. When we choose Jesus Christ as our Savior we become children of God. As a result of that choice, Jesus’ saving power immerses and clothes us in the righteousness of Christ. God sees us as His own!

In Romans 8, Paul tells us that as God’s own children, we become heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. What an incredible thought! At the point of your salvation, the Lord Jesus begins to transform you into the ways of righteousness. Moving forward in our journey, we are called to be His hands and feet, and therefore servants, obedient children, of the Most High God.

Scripture tells us that we are God’s handiwork. We are hand-crafted by Him and given unique gifts and talents – like no other person’s. He planned “ahead of time” for you to use your gifts for blessing and helping others along the journey. In giving you a voice to sing, you are privileged to share your voice with a world that desperately needs the beauty of His creativity. In 1 Peter 2:9, we are called, as God’s special possession, to declare the praises of Him “who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.” Praise God that we have our voices to sing praises to Him who loves us like no other. May your light shine through the gift that is yours, your unique and beautiful voice. May you never stop using that gift to sing praises to your God.

Micah, a prophet of old, says that we must remember our journey so that we may “know the righteous acts of the Lord” and fulfill His requirements of acting with justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with Him. Our journey is a transforming process as we learn more of who He is, and become more like Him. Never forget the journey He has begun for you, a journey that





Tuesday

*<sup>17</sup> Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

Romans 8:17 (NIV)

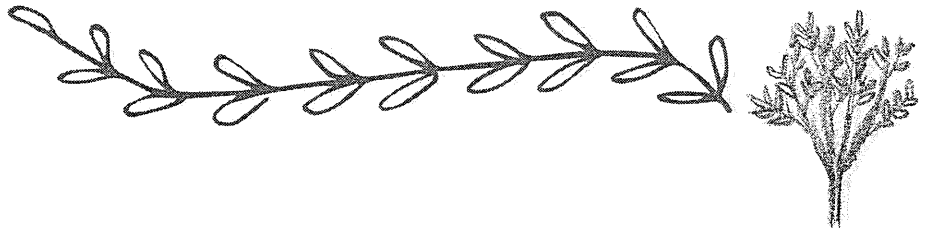
**Desert Song** – Hillsong

And this is my prayer in the battle  
And triumph is still on it's way  
I am a conqueror and co-heir with Christ  
So firm on His promise I'll stand

I will bring praise  
I will bring praise  
No weapon forged against me shall remain

I will rejoice  
I will declare  
God is my victory and He is here





Thursday

<sup>10</sup> For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)

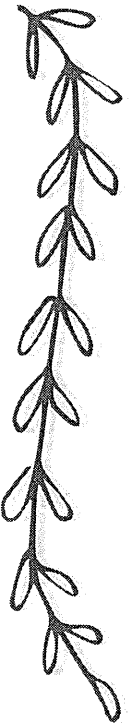
**With Every Act of Love** – Jason Gray and Jason Ingram

Sitting at the stoplight  
He can't be bothered by the heart cry  
Written on the cardboard in her hands  
Oh, but when she looks him in the eye  
His heart is broken, open wide  
And he feels the hand of God reach out through him  
As heaven touches earth

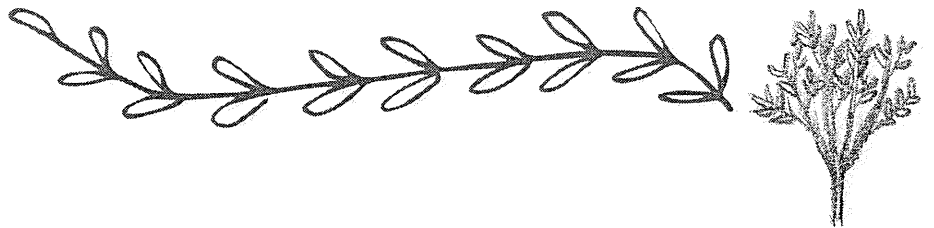
We bring the kingdom come  
(Oh oh oh-oh oh oh oh)  
With every act of love  
Jesus, help us carry You  
Alive in us, Your light shines through  
With every act of love  
We bring the kingdom come

There's silence at the table  
He wants to talk but he's not able  
For all the shame that's locked him deep inside  
Oh, but her words are the medicine  
When she says they can begin again  
And forgiveness will set him free tonight  
As heaven touches earth

We bring the kingdom come  
(Oh oh oh-oh oh oh oh)  
With every act of love  
Jesus, help...







## WEEK THREE – Knowing the Character of God

### Monday

<sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD, my soul. LORD my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendor and majesty.<sup>2</sup> The LORD wraps himself in light as with a garment; he stretches out the heavens like a tent<sup>3</sup> and lays the beams of his upper chambers on their waters. He makes the clouds his chariot and rides on the wings of the wind. <sup>4</sup> He makes winds his messengers, flames of fire his servants.

<sup>5</sup> He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved.

<sup>31</sup> May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works—<sup>32</sup> he who looks at the earth, and it trembles, who touches the mountains, and they smoke. <sup>33</sup> I will sing to the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

Psalm 104:1-5; 31-33 (NIV)

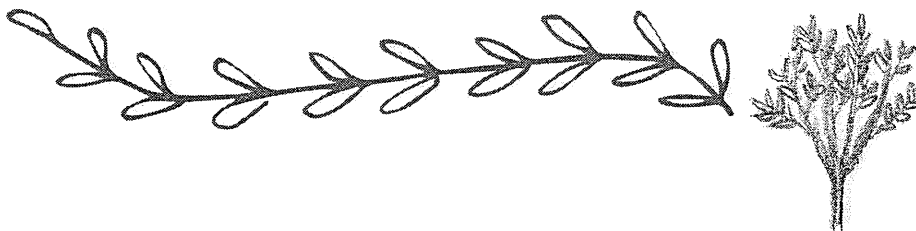
Have you ever had a moment or experience where you felt the presence of God in a very real way? Have you had a deep prayer or a longing in your life that just wouldn't or couldn't go away, but suddenly was fulfilled in an instant by your amazing God?

There have been many times in my life that I felt the subtle presence of the Lord working in my life. However, in May of 1993, I felt God in a real and powerful way! I had just graduated from college and had spent a month in Natchez, Mississippi singing with the Natchez Opera Company. I had been dating my wife, at that time my girlfriend, for a year and I missed her terribly. So, as an invincible young man, I thought it would be a great idea to drive through the night from Mississippi to Indiana. At 6:30am, I fell asleep listening to Mozart on the car radio. I woke up as my car was going off the side of the road. The next thing I knew, I had no control, and everything went quiet, very still, and a deep sense of calm came over me. I was no longer steering, but God was. The car went across two highway lanes, through the median, across the two oncoming lanes, spun off the other side of the highway, made two complete 360° donuts, and stopped a foot or two in front of a telephone pole.

In those moments I felt nothing but the overwhelming love of a Holy and Righteous God who was faithful and merciful to me. He covered me and protected my life that day, surrounding me with light I could actually feel. In that quiet moment, I sensed a deep, deep peace, and in that peace was no fear at all. Although I should not be alive today, my Redeemer and Defender knew it was not my time, and He took over.

I wish I could tell you, that from that day forward I got it all right, and my life has been perfect ever since. However, my God who is holy, merciful, strong, and full of abundant light, has come to me over and over again, pursuing me, showing me purpose in my life, growing me, and drawing me to Him. I am grateful that He continues to pursue me, working out His purpose in





Tuesday

<sup>22</sup> Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. <sup>23</sup> They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:22-23 (NIV)

**Great is Thy Faithfulness** – Thomas Chisolm

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;  
There is no shadow of turning with Thee,  
Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not,  
As Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be.

*Great is Thy faithfulness!*

*Great is Thy faithfulness!*

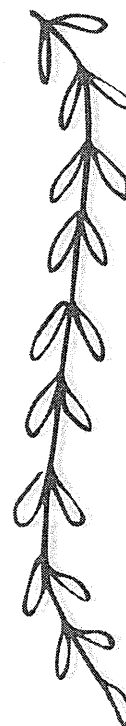
*Morning by morning new mercies I see*

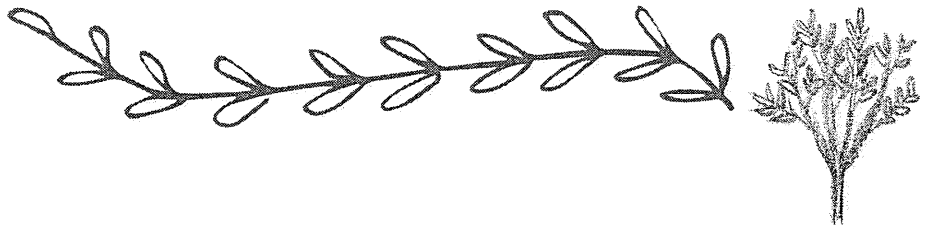
*All I have needed Thy hand hath provided*

*Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!*

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,  
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above;  
Join with all nature in manifold witness,  
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;  
Strength for today, and bright hope for tomorrow  
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside.





**Thursday**

*<sup>5</sup> This is the message we heard from Jesus<sup>1</sup> and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all.*

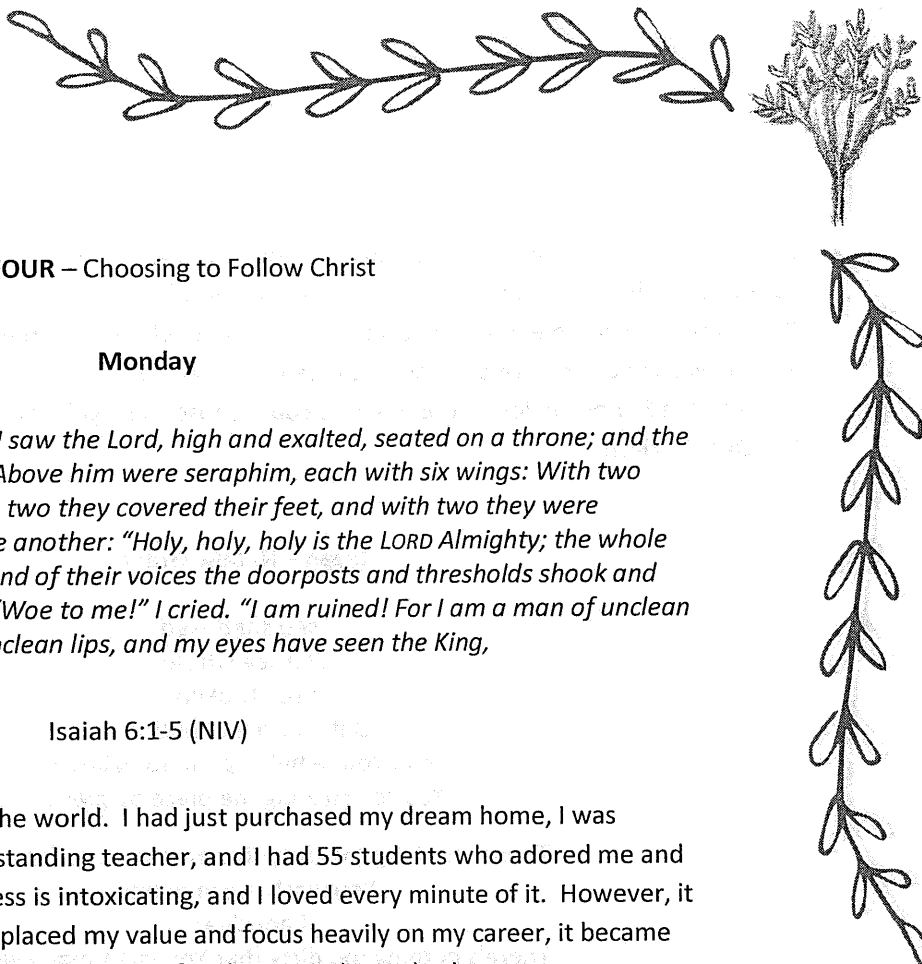
1 John 1: 5 New Living Translation (NLT)

**Be Thou My Vision –Eleanor Hull**

Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;  
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art.  
Thou my best Thought, by day or by night,  
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

High King of Heaven, my victory won,  
May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright Heaven's Sun!  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,  
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.





## WEEK FOUR – Choosing to Follow Christ

### Monday

*6 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. <sup>3</sup> And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” <sup>4</sup> At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup> “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”*

Isaiah 6:1-5 (NIV)

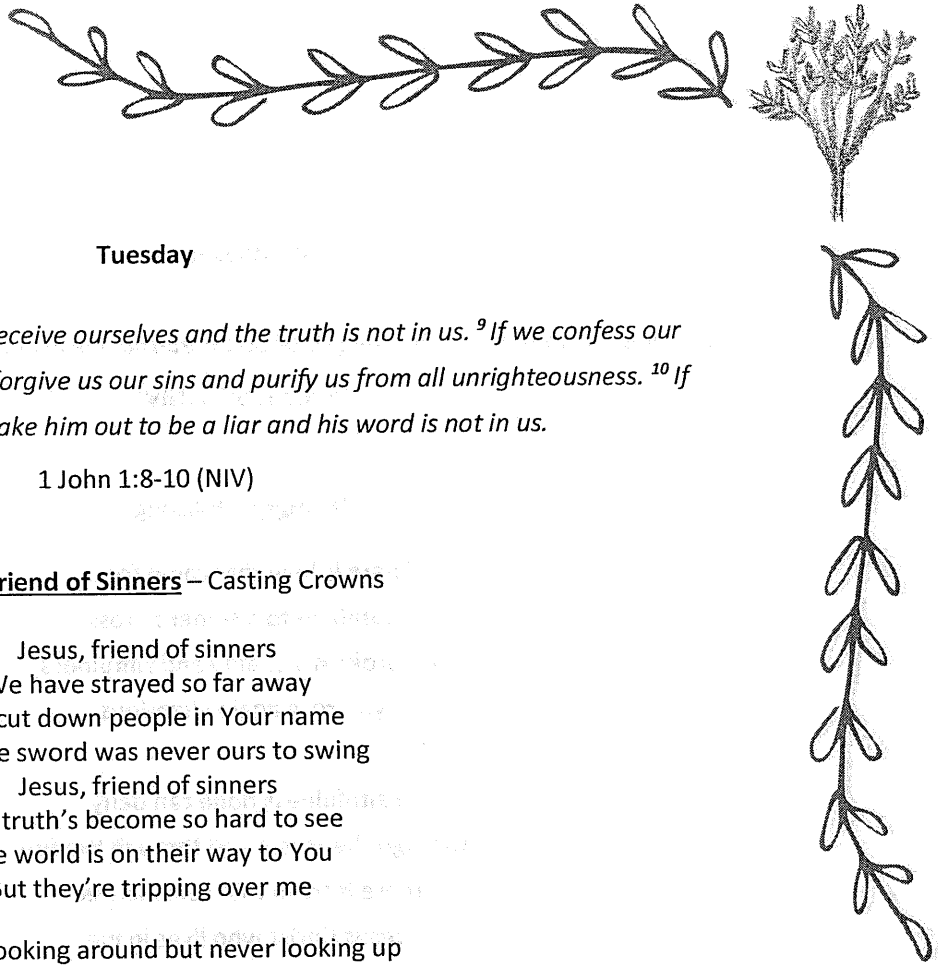
In Illinois I thought I was on top of the world. I had just purchased my dream home, I was named the College of Fine Arts Outstanding teacher, and I had 55 students who adored me and thought I could do no wrong. Success is intoxicating, and I loved every minute of it. However, it came at the cost of my family. As I placed my value and focus heavily on my career, it became an idol. I was blinded to the fact that God and my family were taking a back seat.

When the inevitable storms rolled in, I was unprepared. Although my career was blossoming, my relationship with my wife and children was withering and tensions rose. In the darkness of that realization I could feel the distance growing, and our family was suffering. I was so close to having everything I wanted in my job, only to realize it meant nothing if I didn't have my God and my family.

This realization drove me to my knees. I remember praying to God “Father, I don't care about my job or my success, just protect my family.” Our God is the One who moves heaven and earth to answer the prayer of surrender to Him; He honors a “broken and contrite heart.” When we are broken and on our knees before Him, He hears us, sees our wounds, and binds them up. He steered me out of the storm, forgave my sins, and restored our family.

He answered that prayer by causing us to make a move to Texas. He has walked with us through the aftermath of the storm. Our family is now flourishing, and we are stronger than we've ever been. Not only have we been restored, but our prayers have been answered through the additional gift of a loving community where we are supported and cared for.

Don't we hate it when preachers talk about sin? We think they live in the dark ages. We would like the message to be all flowers and sunshine. A God of love and never a God of judgement.



Tuesday

*<sup>8</sup> If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup> If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.*

1 John 1:8-10 (NIV)

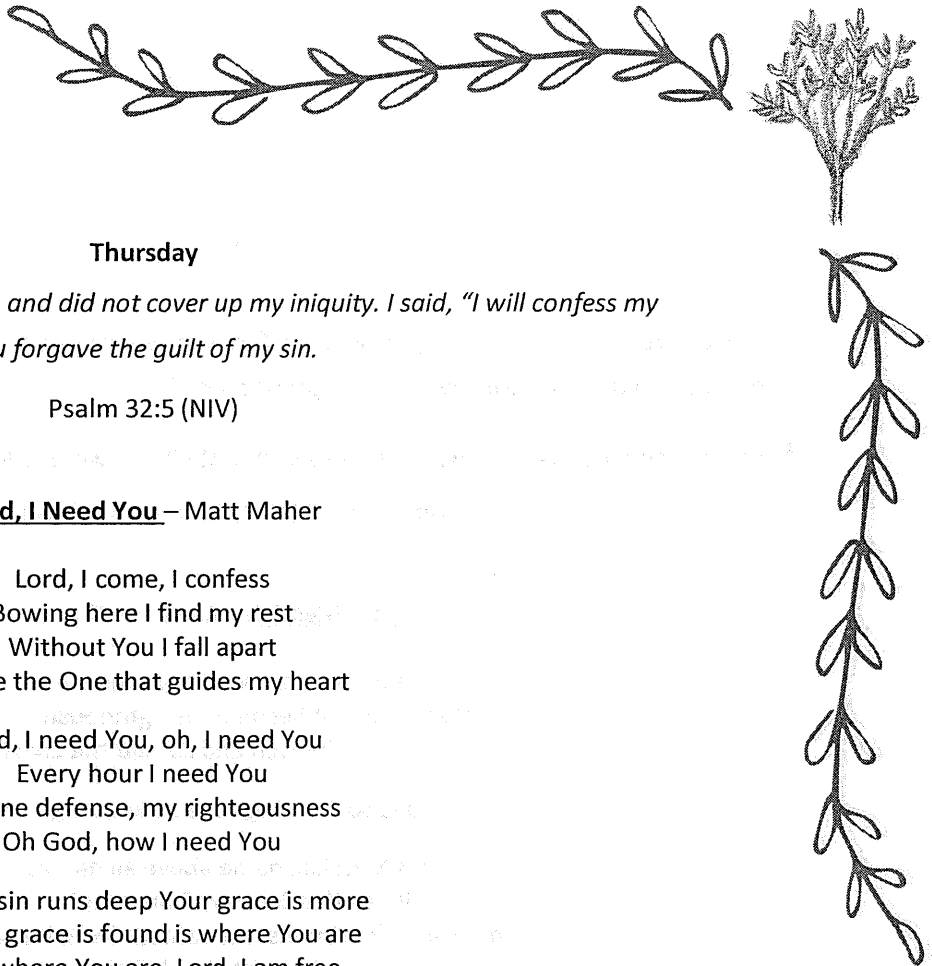
**Jesus, Friend of Sinners** – Casting Crowns

Jesus, friend of sinners  
We have strayed so far away  
We cut down people in Your name  
But the sword was never ours to swing  
Jesus, friend of sinners  
The truth's become so hard to see  
The world is on their way to You  
But they're tripping over me

Always looking around but never looking up  
I'm so double minded  
A plank-eyed saint with dirty hands  
And a heart divided

Oh Jesus, friend of sinners  
Open our eyes to the world  
At the end our pointing fingers  
Let our hearts be led by mercy  
Help us reach with open hearts and open doors  
Oh Jesus, friend of sinners  
Break our hearts for what breaks Yours

Jesus, friend of sinners  
The One whose writing in the sand  
Made the righteous turn away  
And the stones fall from their hands  
Help us to remember  
We are all the least of these  
Let the memory of Your mercy  
Bring Your people to their knees



**Thursday**

*<sup>5</sup> Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." And you forgave the guilt of my sin.*

Psalm 32:5 (NIV)

**Lord, I Need You – Matt Maher**

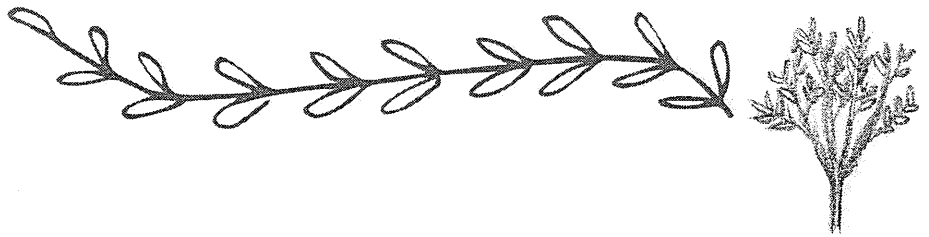
Lord, I come, I confess  
Bowing here I find my rest  
Without You I fall apart  
You're the One that guides my heart

Lord, I need You, oh, I need You  
Every hour I need You  
My one defense, my righteousness  
Oh God, how I need You

Where sin runs deep Your grace is more  
Where grace is found is where You are  
And where You are, Lord, I am free  
Holiness is Christ in me

Lord, I need You, oh, I need You  
Every hour I need You  
My one defense, my righteousness  
Oh God, how I need You

To teach my song to rise to You  
When temptation comes my way  
When I cannot stand I'll fall on You  
Jesus,...



## WEEK FIVE – Becoming Jesus’ Disciple

### Monday

*<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup> For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. <sup>26</sup> What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?”*

Matthew 16:24-26 (NIV)

Yes, it really is possible to gain the world and forfeit your soul. We see it all around us. At times, in our own lives as believers, we experience an overwhelming emptiness that comes from turning our eyes and hearts away from our Source of life, our Creator and Redeemer. And it is through confession and prayer that Jesus shows us the way back to the Father.

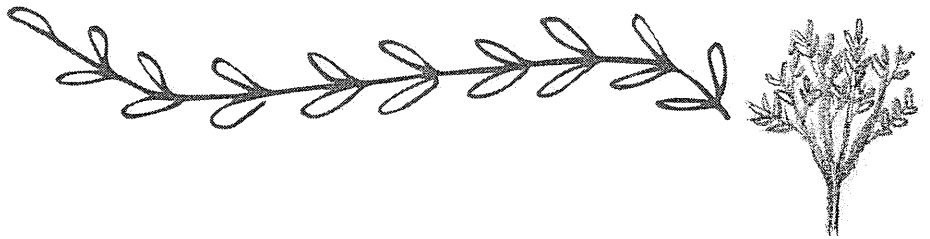
Diane Langberg, a well-known Christian psychotherapist, defines tragedy as “being highly successful all of your life in things that don’t matter.” I am living proof of this. I placed my trust in success and accolades, all the while placing distance between me, my God, and my family. The applause of the world is loud, intoxicating and addictive, but it is also fleeting, and never satisfies. However, living in God’s plan is deeply fulfilling, exciting, and stands the test of time. We are so blessed to have a Savior who doesn’t leave us at the point of salvation. I am grateful for a God who came down to earth, not just to talk the talk, but to walk the walk! Jesus has shown us how to live, and how to care for God’s children.

When we turn our eyes to Jesus, God can do amazing things through us. God constantly pursues us and wants to draw us near. Jesus referred to Himself as the Good Shepherd, bringing His sheep home safely. In the midst of a life-storm, that is exactly what God did for me, as I knelt before him praying and asking for forgiveness. He can do that for you too! Come to Him. He is able to take the storms and pain and turn them into something beautiful.

Jesus commands us that when we receive His grace, we are to carry it forward, to pay it forward. We are told to care for the marginalized, the poor, and the brokenhearted. He modeled this for us in the flesh. We are blessed to receive a grace that knows no bounds and a love that never ends! We are merciful because we have received mercy. We forgive because we are forgiven. We love because we are loved. We give to others because we have been given so much.

Will you toil all your life and use all your life’s energies to satisfy your soul with more and more of the world’s applause – or whatever your addiction? Or will you show grace to the world around you, because you have received grace from the gracious God of all good gifts.





Tuesday

<sup>28</sup> "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Matthew 11:28-30(NIV)

**Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus** – Helen Lemmel

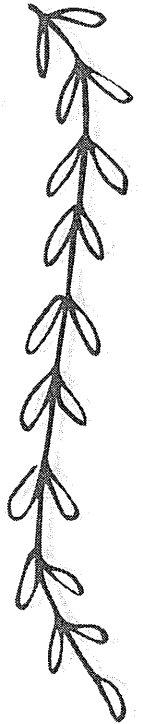
O soul, are you weary and troubled?  
No light in the darkness you see?  
There's light for a look at the Savior,  
And life more abundant and free!

*Refrain:*

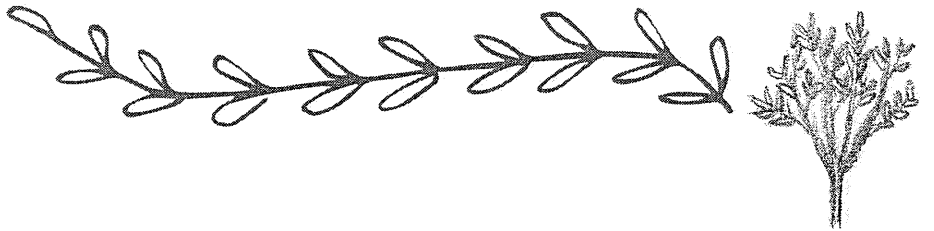
Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,  
In the light of His glory and grace.

Through death into life everlasting  
He passed, and we follow Him there;  
O'er us sin no more hath dominion—  
For more than conquerors we are!

His Word shall not fail you—He promised;  
Believe Him, and all will be well:  
Then go to a world that is dying,  
His perfect salvation to tell!







Thursday

<sup>16</sup> Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray continually, <sup>18</sup> give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NIV)

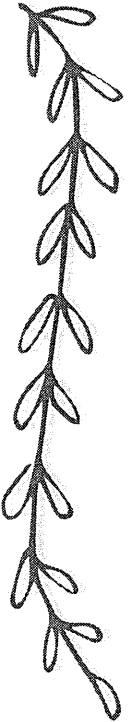
**Forever** – Chris Tomlin

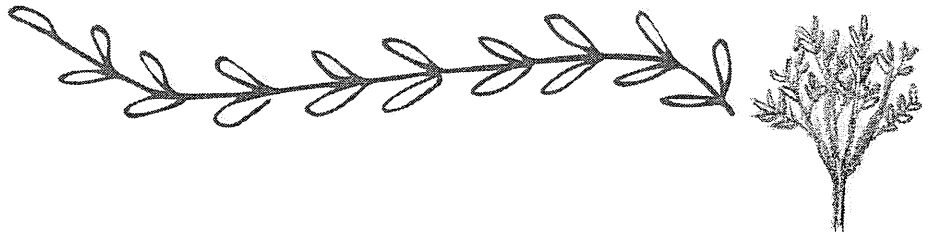
Give thanks to the Lord  
Our God and King  
His love endures forever  
For He is good, He is above all things  
His love endures forever  
Sing praise, sing praise  
With a mighty hand  
and outstretched arm  
His love endures forever  
For the life that's been reborn  
His love endures forever  
Sing praise

Yeah

Forever God is faithful  
Forever God is strong  
Forever God is with us  
Forever

From the rising to the setting sun  
His love endures forever  
By the grace of God  
We will carry on  
His love endures forever  
Sing praise





## WEEK SIX – Reading and Studying the Word

### Monday

<sup>1</sup>*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

<sup>12</sup>*For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

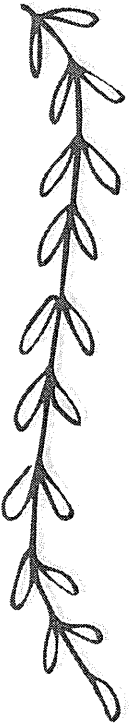
John 1:1 (NIV); Hebrews 4:12 (NIV)

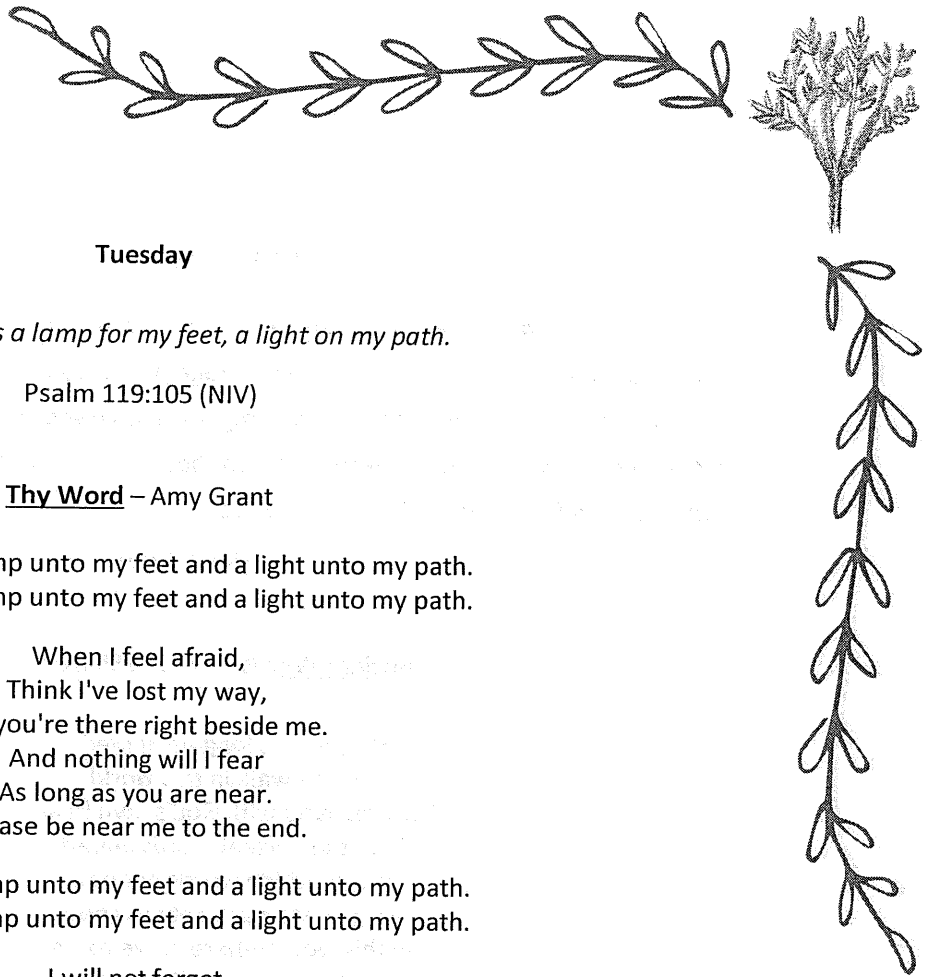
I was twelve years old when I found out I was adopted. It was difficult to understand what that meant. I had feelings of loneliness, emptiness, and a growing need to feel like I belonged. My parents were great and provided a life with opportunities that most kids would dream of. Still, I longed for an identity, a stability and peace that I simply felt was missing. I felt lost and uncertain. I found myself thinking, “If I can do more, be more, then I will belong and people will love and respect me.”

No amount of placing your hope and identity in things of this earth or in others, will give you the deep peace and security you desire. I can share with you that I have spent a great part of my life looking for that security, that peace – in my career, in affirmation from bosses and people, from my wife, and from my parents. Don’t get me wrong, my wife and parents both love me, but they are human, and are not capable of giving me what only God can supply.

The word of God stands as my stabilizing force. The word of God is our light in the darkness. It is truth and hope. For me, it took searching and struggling to find love and fulfillment in things and in other people, to finally realize that what I yearned for could be found in God’s word. His message of truth and love that I needed to hear – His message straight to me, for me – was there! His word is truly “alive and active.”

Scriptures, whether they are read or heard, are God’s love story to His children. They teach us, guide us, and correct us when we stray. God pursues us through His words of truth in the Bible, and when we read, study, hear, and sing His word, our lives become grounded. That is why we as believers sing the songs of faith. When we sing that hymn of faith, that praise song of joy, Handel’s Messiah, Mendelssohn’s Elijah, or Beethoven’s Ode to Joy – all bursting with the word of God – we feel the very deep and real presence of God, and His unending love for us. Our spirits are lifted. Our mission as singers is to share with the world the very powerful and living word of God, to praise His splendor and Majesty, to thank Him for what He did at Calvary and for what He is doing in our lives now.





Tuesday

<sup>105</sup> *Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.*

Psalm 119:105 (NIV)

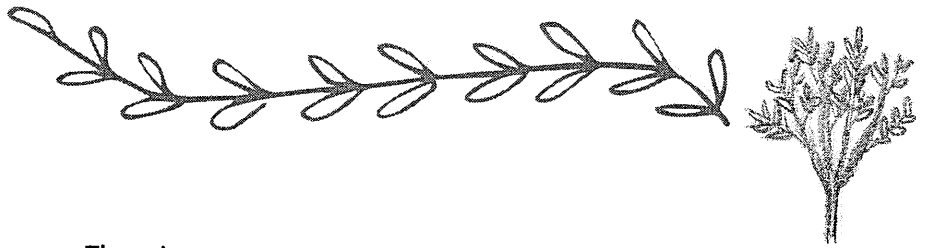
**Thy Word** – Amy Grant

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.  
Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

When I feel afraid,  
Think I've lost my way,  
Still you're there right beside me.  
And nothing will I fear  
As long as you are near.  
Please be near me to the end.

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.  
Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

I will not forget  
Your love for me and yet  
My heart forever is wandering.  
Jesus be my guide,  
And hold me to your side,  
I will love you to the end.



Thursday

<sup>15</sup> Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. <sup>16</sup> Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly.

2 Timothy 2:15-16 (NIV)

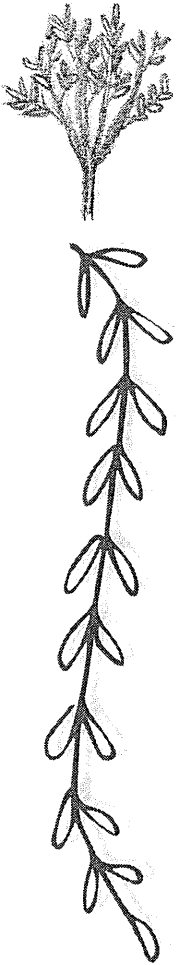
**Show Us Christ** – Bob Kauflin and Doug Plank- Sovereign Grace Music

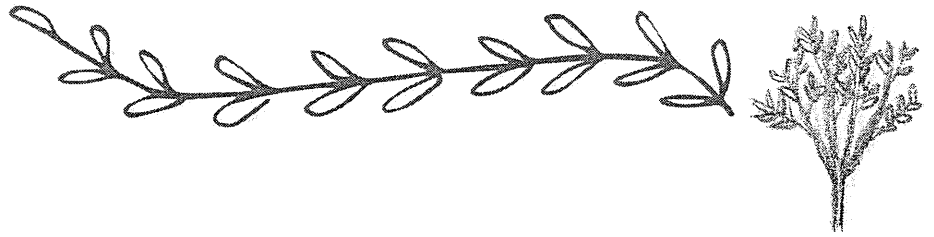
Prepare our hearts, O God  
Help us to receive  
Break the hard and stony ground  
Help our unbelief  
Plant Your Word down deep in us  
Cause it to bear fruit  
Open up our ears to hear  
Lead us in Your truth

Show us Christ, show us Christ  
O God, reveal Your glory  
Through the preaching of Your Word  
Until every heart confesses Christ is Lord

Your Word is living light  
Upon our darkened eyes  
Guards us through temptations  
Makes the simple wise  
Your Word is food for famished ones  
Freedom for the slave  
Riches for the needy soul  
Come speak to us today

Where else can we go, Lord  
Where else can we go  
You have the words of eternal life





## WEEK SEVEN – Letting the Word Dwell in You

### Monday

<sup>16</sup> *Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.*

Colossians 3:16 (NIV)

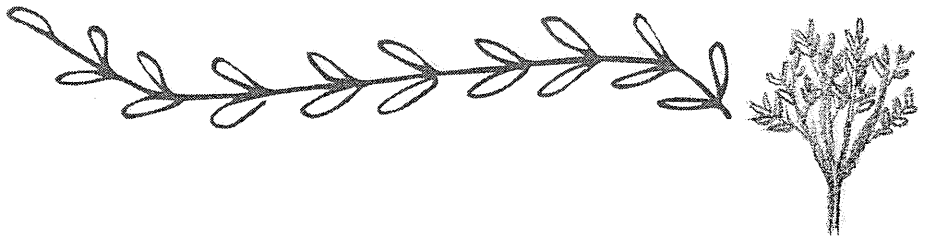
Have you ever had a song's words and melody take possession of you so deeply that you absolutely could not stop singing it in your mind? It can be maddening! You can try singing an entirely different song over and over – you try everything imaginable to get rid of that tune – to no avail. Our minds do crazy things with melodies – and words.

But the way our minds work is to our great advantage as well. We learn words and tunes of praise songs and hymns of faith during worship, then later these words and tunes pop into our heads at random, but very pertinent times. God has an amazing way of breathing life into those very words and songs of praise and faith just when we need them.

In your darkest moments, have you ever experienced the healing power of song and word wash over you? Have you felt the peace come when you thought it was impossible? We, as singers, are given one of the most beautiful gifts to use for lifting our voices to our Creator, and for lifting up our fellow strugglers. He speaks to us, and through us, with His song. How awesome that God gives us gifts that we can return to Him for His glory.

Sing songs of praise in your heart as you lie down to sleep at night. You will wake up in the morning singing. Plant His scripture-music deeply in your heart so that it takes root. God is speaking to you! Remember *it is God speaking to you* through the power of His Holy Spirit in His living and active word. Therefore, allow yourself to feel the all-consuming power of a God who seeks you, speaks to you, plants His word in you, sings over you, sings through you, and brings glory and gratitude into your life!





Tuesday

*<sup>11</sup> I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*

Psalm 119:11 (NIV)

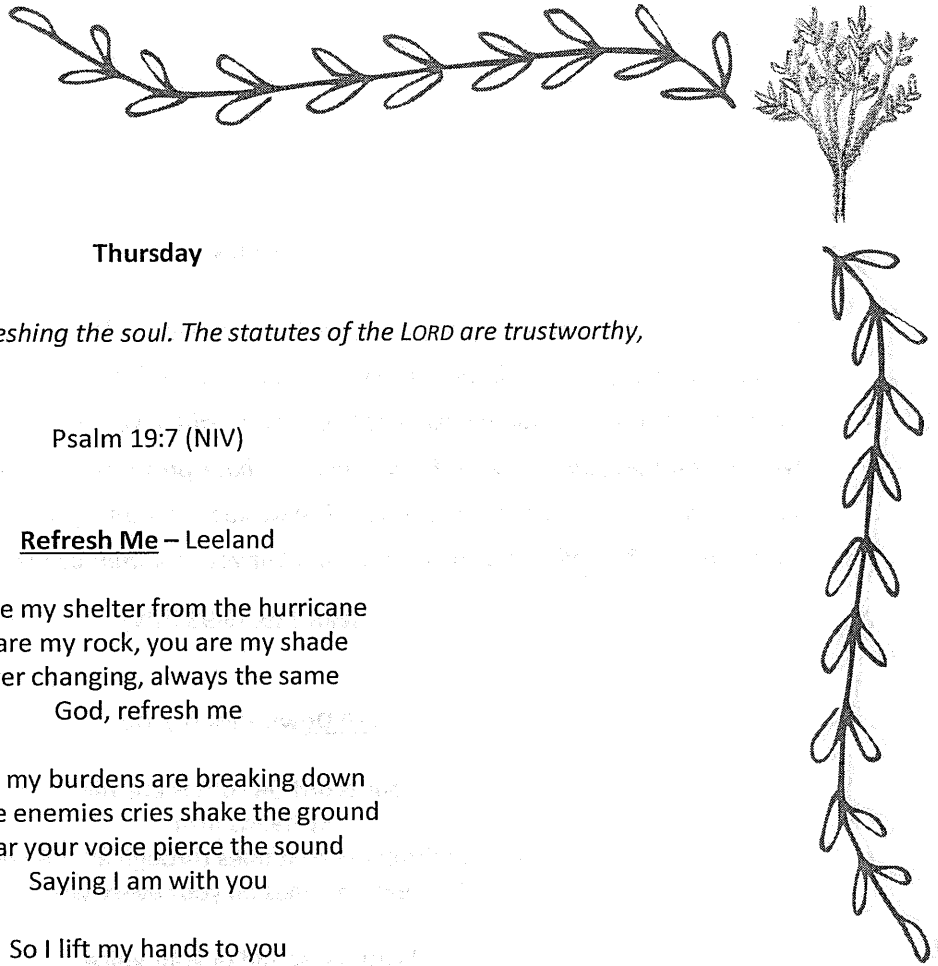
**Speak, O Lord** - Keith and Kristyn Getty

Speak, O Lord, as we come to You  
To receive the food of Your Holy Word.  
Take Your truth, plant it deep in us;  
Shape and fashion us in Your likeness,  
That the light of Christ might be seen today  
In our acts of love and our deeds of faith.  
Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us  
All Your purposes for Your glory.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience,  
Holy reverence, true humility;  
Test our thoughts and our attitudes  
In the radiance of Your purity.  
Cause our faith to rise; cause our eyes to see  
Your majestic love and authority.  
Words of pow'r that can never fail—  
Let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds;  
Help us grasp the heights of Your plans for us—  
Truths unchanged from the dawn of time  
That will echo down through eternity.  
And by grace we'll stand on Your promises,  
And by faith we'll walk as You walk with us.  
Speak, O Lord, till Your church is built  
And the earth is filled with Your glory.





**Thursday**

*<sup>7</sup>The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.*

Psalm 19:7 (NIV)

**Refresh Me – Leeland**

You are my shelter from the hurricane  
You are my rock, you are my shade  
Never changing, always the same  
God, refresh me

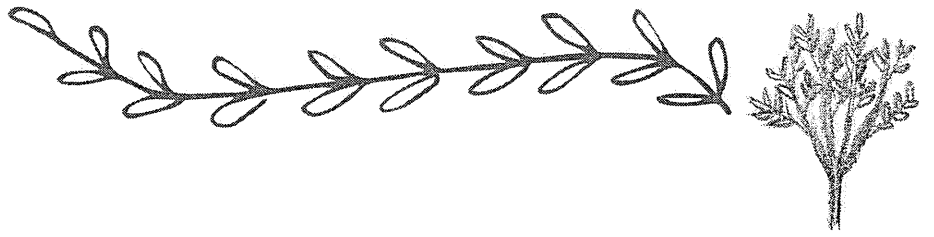
When my burdens are breaking down  
And the enemies cries shake the ground  
I hear your voice pierce the sound  
Saying I am with you

So I lift my hands to you  
I lift my heart to you  
Refresh me, God, refresh me

I raise my weakness high  
In it you're glorified  
Refresh me, God, refresh me

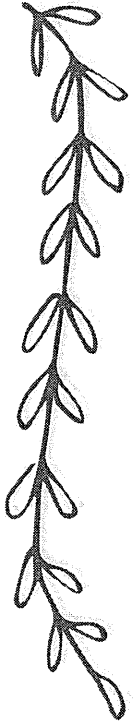
Let the river flow down from your throne  
Let it wash me now and make me whole  
Lord, fill my heart, flood my soul  
Refresh me, God, refresh me

I loose my hands take control  
God let your purposes unfold  
There's a greater story to be told  
Refresh me, God, refresh me

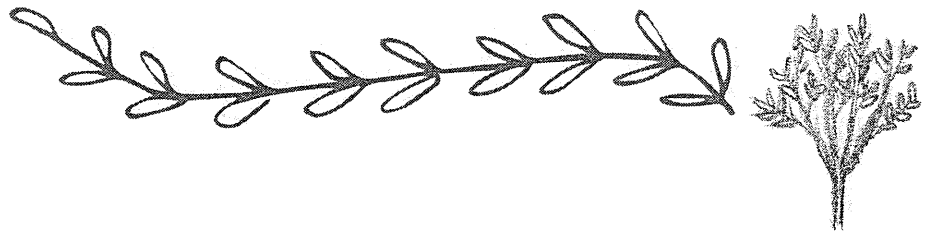


Water still, you are Lord over all  
With the touch of your robe, the sick are healed  
For you Jesus we all fall down

We fall down, we fall down







## WEEK EIGHT – Rooted and Grounded in the Word

### Monday

*<sup>6</sup> So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, <sup>7</sup> rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.*

*<sup>8</sup> See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ. <sup>9</sup> For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.*

### Colossians 2:6-9 (NIV)

I wish I could tell you that I have figured out what being firmly rooted in God's word and promises feels like on a continual basis. The truth is that I identify greatly with Jesus' parable of the sower. My life has taken on the various soil forms throughout my journey. I believe that we can all claim the various soils.

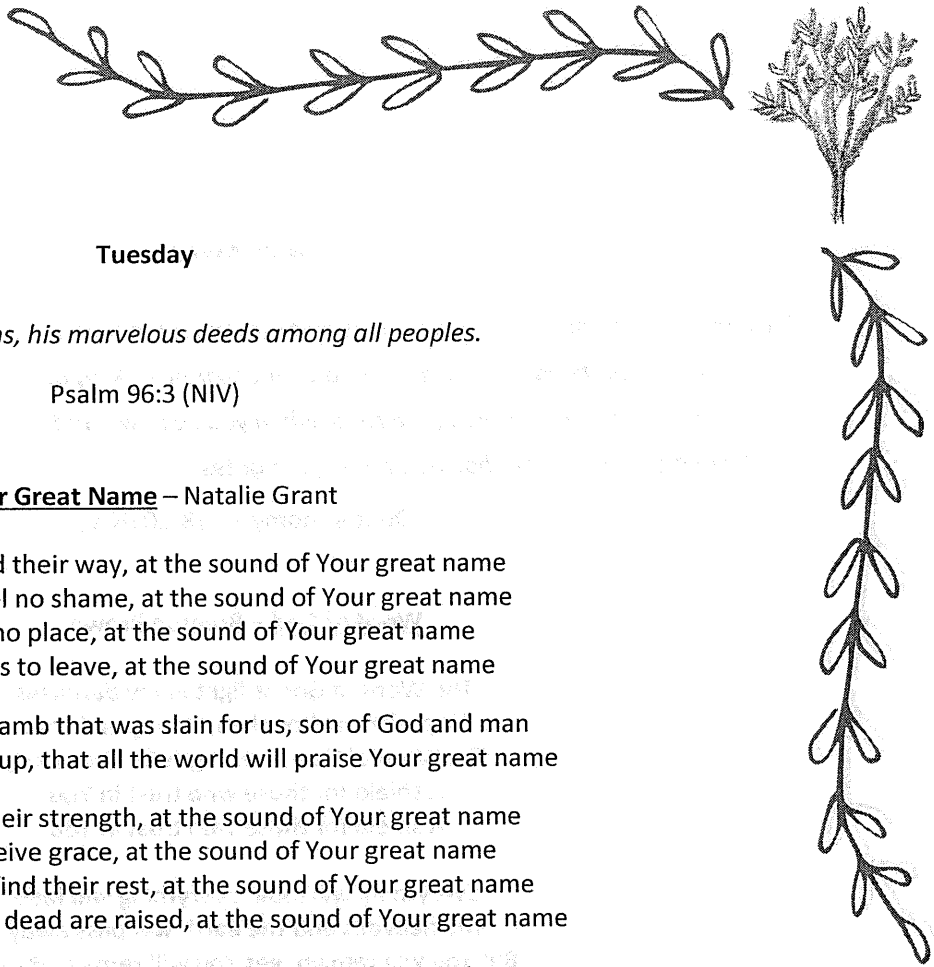
In college I would hear God's word and not understand it, and it quickly fell away. I knew that I was supposed to feel changed and strengthened by the hearing of scripture, but it simply didn't take root. I would fall back into the patterns of this world and the emptiness of striving for earthly things. I have also been the rocky soil where I heard the word, and in hearing felt God's tremendous promise for my life and peace, only to have it fade away because I did not follow up with study of the word and prayer.

My struggle has always been with wanting to feel accepted, to feel loved deeply and unconditionally. I would hear the words of unending love and feel God washing over me only to make the mistake of allowing my heart to again look for that fulfillment elsewhere – in a person, a job, things that bring pleasure – and the word wasn't allowed to take root. Thorns represent the distractions of chasing worldly desires rather than fixing our eyes upon Jesus. As a result, those distractions have at times blocked out the healing, teaching, and redemptive power of God's words to me.

I can say that with all my shortcomings, God doesn't give up on me. I can say that I am beginning to feel the seed produce a bountiful crop in my life. I have seen myself beginning to surrender the desires of this world and acceptance of others to reliance on God and His approval. It is a process of our allowing God to improve the soil of our hearts. He can then teach us, bless us, and grow us into the image of His Son.

Consider all the scriptures presented this week. Take care to let these words and truths take root in the soil of your heart. Hear the precious words of God!





Tuesday

<sup>3</sup> *Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.*

Psalm 96:3 (NIV)

**Your Great Name** – Natalie Grant

Lost are saved, find their way, at the sound of Your great name  
All condemned, feel no shame, at the sound of Your great name  
Every fear, has no place, at the sound of Your great name  
The enemy, he has to leave, at the sound of Your great name

Jesus, worthy is the lamb that was slain for us, son of God and man  
You are high and lifted up, that all the world will praise Your great name

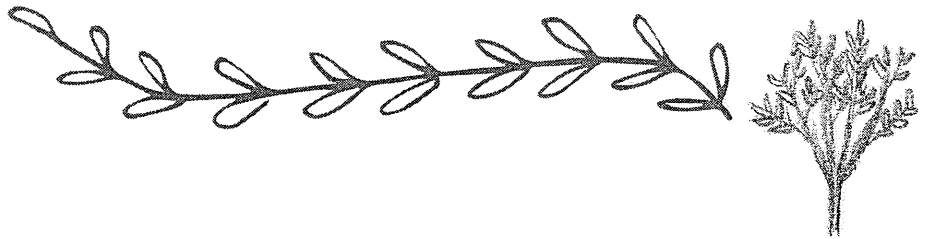
All the weak, find their strength, at the sound of Your great name  
Hungry souls, receive grace, at the sound of Your great name  
The fatherless, they find their rest, at the sound of Your great name  
Sick are healed, and the dead are raised, at the sound of Your great name

Jesus, worthy is the lamb that was slain for us, son of god and man  
You are high and lifted up, that all the world will praise Your great name  
Oh, Your great name

Redeemer, my healer, almighty  
My savior, defender, You are my king

Redeemer, my healer, almighty  
My savior, defender, You are my king

Jesus, the name of Jesus  
You are high and lifted up and all the world will praise Your great name  
Slain for us, son of God and man  
You are high and lifted up, that all the world will praise Your great name



Thursday

13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake.<sup>2</sup> Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. <sup>3</sup> Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. <sup>4</sup> As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. <sup>5</sup> Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. <sup>6</sup> But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. <sup>7</sup> Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. <sup>8</sup> Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. <sup>9</sup> Whoever has ears, let them hear."

Matthew 13:1-9(NIV)

**The Potter's Hand** – Darlene Zschech

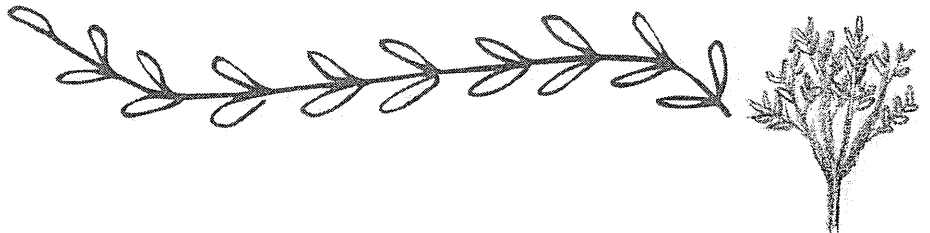
Beautiful Lord, wonderful saviour  
I know for sure, all of my days are held in Your hands  
Crafted into Your perfect plan

You gently call me, into Your presence  
Guiding me by, Your Holy Spirit  
Teach me dear Lord  
To live all of my life through Your eyes

I'm captured by, Your Holy calling  
Set me apart  
I know You're drawing me to Yourself  
Lead me Lord I pray

Take me, Mold me  
Use me, Fill me  
I give my life to the Potter's hands  
Hold me, Guide me  
Lead me, Walk beside me  
I give my life to the Potter's hand

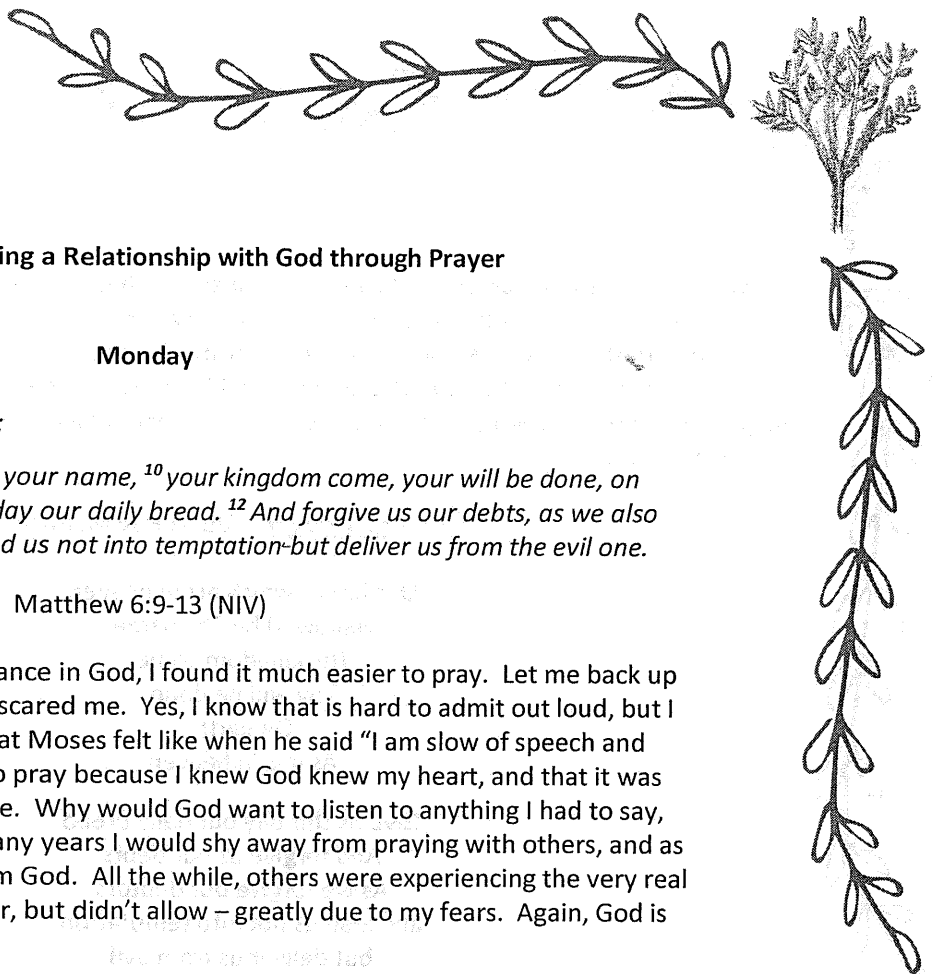




I can sing 'cause You pick me up  
Sing 'cause You're there  
I can sing 'cause You hear me, Lord  
When I call to You in prayer

I can sing with my last breath  
Sing for I know  
That I'll sing with the angels  
And the saints around the throne





## WEEK NINE – Building a Relationship with God through Prayer

### Monday

<sup>9</sup> *“This, then, is how you should pray:*

*“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, <sup>10</sup> your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. <sup>11</sup> Give us today our daily bread. <sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. <sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation-but deliver us from the evil one.*

Matthew 6:9-13 (NIV)

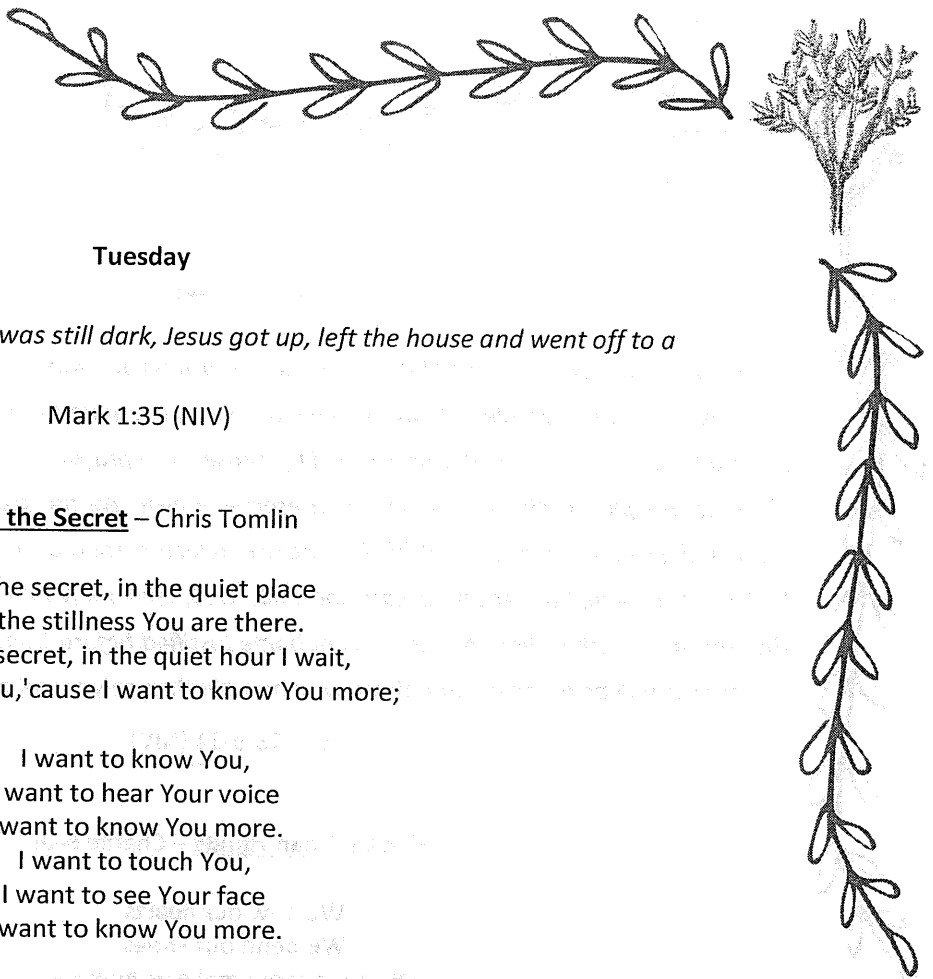
As I began to place my trust and reliance in God, I found it much easier to pray. Let me back up and catch you up to speed. Praying scared me. Yes, I know that is hard to admit out loud, but I had a real fear of prayer. I know what Moses felt like when he said “I am slow of speech and tongue.” I always felt ill-equipped to pray because I knew God knew my heart, and that it was not always pretty or in the right place. Why would God want to listen to anything I had to say, to ask, or to share with Him? For many years I would shy away from praying with others, and as a result it felt like I was far away from God. All the while, others were experiencing the very real and intimate relationship I longed for, but didn’t allow – greatly due to my fears. Again, God is persistent.

In 2006, I was called to the position of Youth Music Minister at Second Presbyterian Church, and guess what? I now was forced to face my fear and I began learning to pray out loud. I can tell you nobody laughed or thought the things I shared were funny or shallow. I am so thankful to God for this, because I have grown closer and closer to Him through prayer. He already knows what is on my heart and yours, so share away! You can bring anything to Him.

I talk a lot about each of us being on a journey. God is leading us and teaching us every step of the way. When we begin to turn over to Him our worries, fears, questions, disappointments, and deep hurt, He can take it all and make something beautiful! The Lord teaches us through His example. We must pray, and pray often. We must not try to lift ourselves up like the Pharisee that Jesus described, instead we must humble ourselves before the Lord and He will hear us.

Finally, in losing my mother this year, my life has changed! I miss her greatly and our family is just not the same without her here. Watching cancer take her was grueling. However, from the dust and ashes of our lives God shows us His sovereignty, His grace, and His truth. The day my Mom died my heart broke, but God brought good out of the brokenness. Her life had suddenly become final on this earth, and God showed me through the life of my mom that a life of service to God and to others is pleasing to Him. It is hard to admit, but I have spent a great deal of my life looking for ways to fill and satisfy *me*.

You will hear again God’s love story to me, to all of us...He never gives up! I want to please Him by pouring into others. The only way to do this is to turn my life over to Him and let Him steer



Tuesday

<sup>35</sup> *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.*

Mark 1:35 (NIV)

**In the Secret** – Chris Tomlin

In the secret, in the quiet place  
In the stillness You are there.  
In the secret, in the quiet hour I wait,  
Only for You, 'cause I want to know You more;

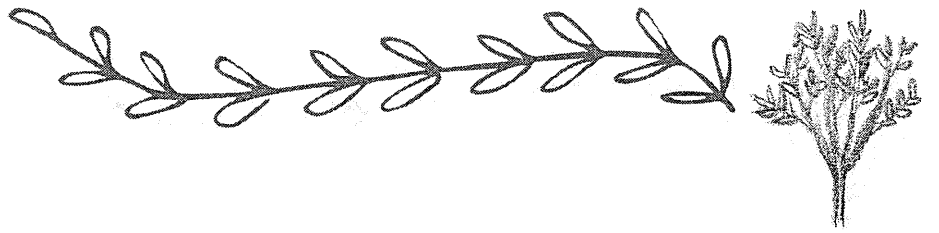
I want to know You,  
I want to hear Your voice  
I want to know You more.  
I want to touch You,  
I want to see Your face  
I want to know You more.

I am reaching for the highest goal,  
that I might receive the prize.  
Pressing onward, pushing every hindrance aside,  
Out of my way, 'cause I want to know you more

I want to know You,  
I want to hear Your voice  
I want to know You more.  
I want to touch You,  
I want to see Your face  
I want to know You more.

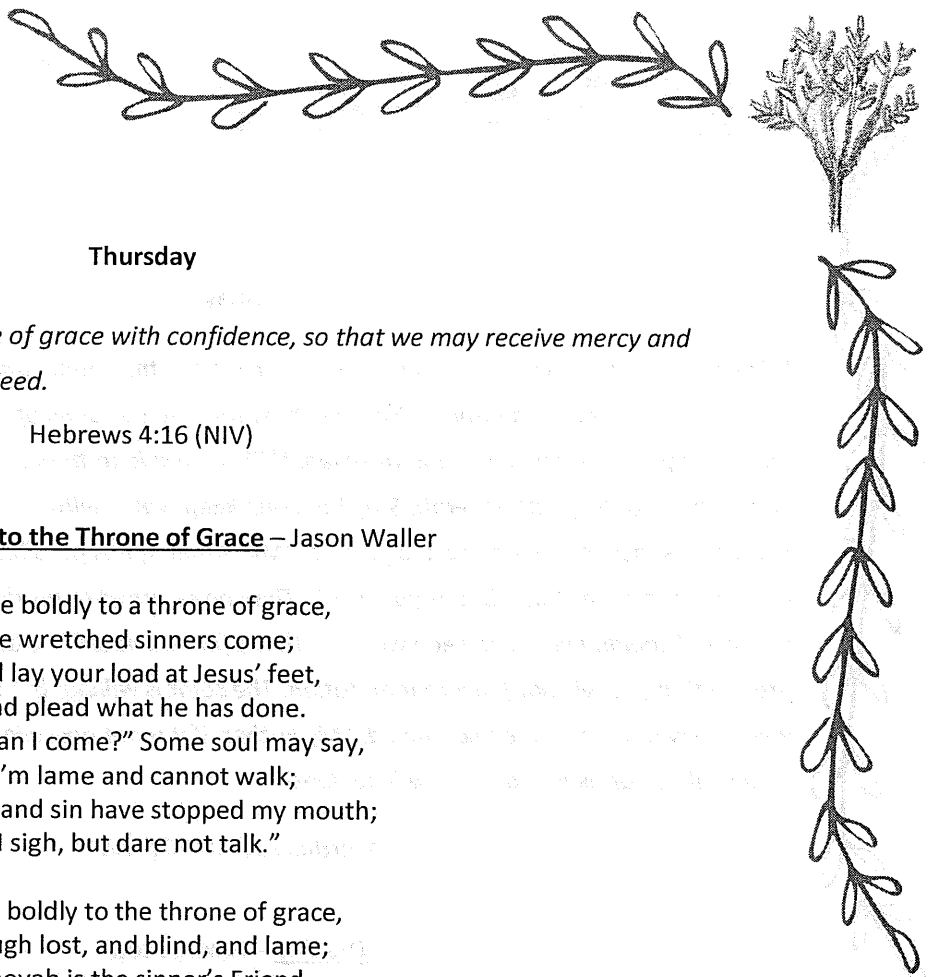
I want to know You,  
I want to hear Your voice  
I want to know You more.  
I want to touch You,  
I want to see Your face  
I want to know You more.

In the secret, in the quiet place  
In the stillness You are there



So give us clean hands  
And give us pure hearts  
Let us not lift our souls to another





Thursday

<sup>16</sup>Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 4:16 (NIV)

**Come Boldly to the Throne of Grace** – Jason Waller

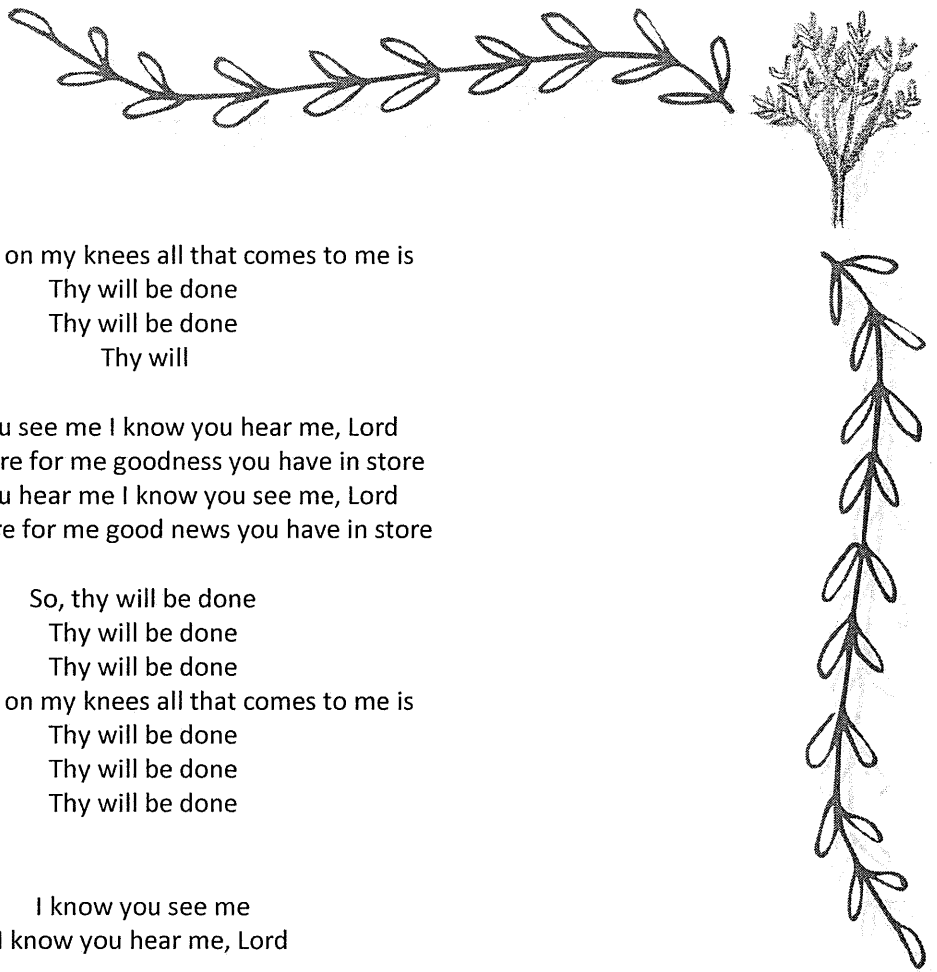
Come boldly to a throne of grace,  
Ye wretched sinners come;  
And lay your load at Jesus' feet,  
And plead what he has done.  
"How can I come?" Some soul may say,  
"I'm lame and cannot walk;  
My guilt and sin have stopped my mouth;  
I sigh, but dare not talk."

Come boldly to the throne of grace,  
Though lost, and blind, and lame;  
Jehovah is the sinner's Friend,  
And ever was the same.  
He makes the dead to hear his voice;  
He makes the blind to see;  
The sinner lost he came to save,  
And set the prisoner free.

Come boldly to the throne of grace,  
For Jesus fills the throne;  
And those he kills he makes alive;  
He hears the sigh or groan.  
Poor bankrupt souls, who feel and know  
The hell of sin within,

Come boldly to the throne of grace;  
The Lord will take you in.



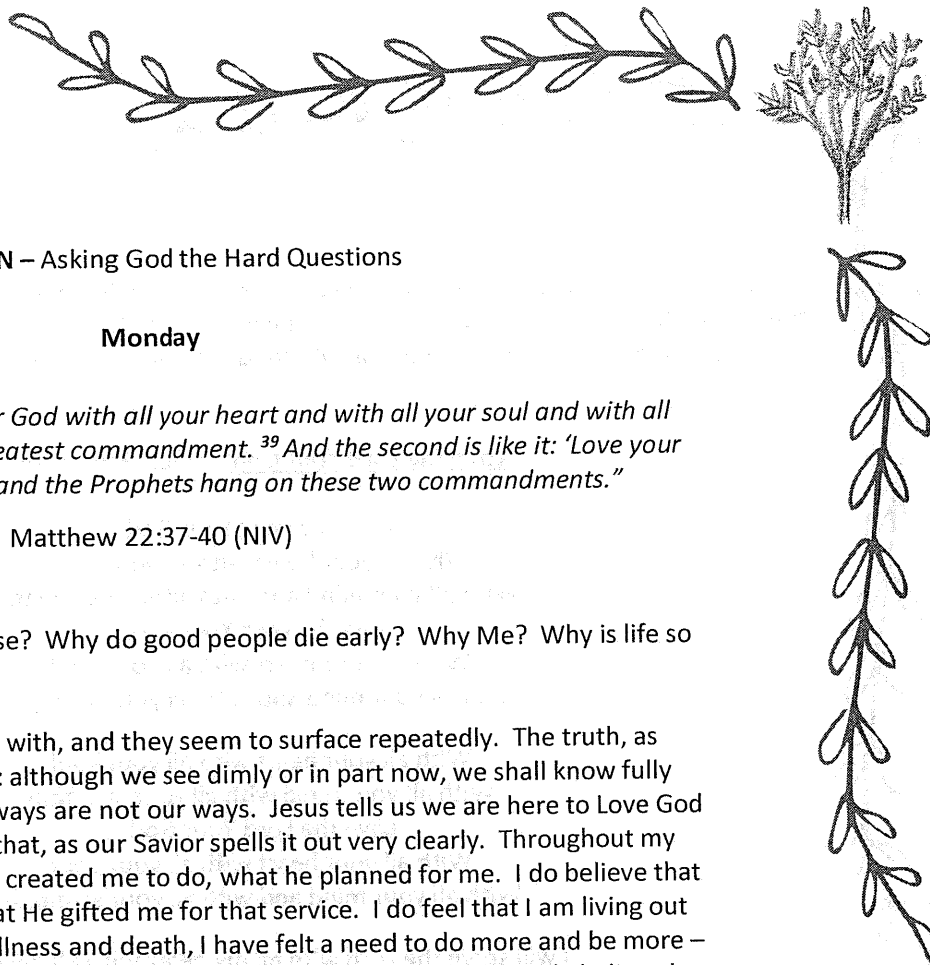


Like a child on my knees all that comes to me is  
Thy will be done  
Thy will be done  
Thy will

I know you see me I know you hear me, Lord  
Your plans are for me goodness you have in store  
I know you hear me I know you see me, Lord  
Your plans are for me good news you have in store

So, thy will be done  
Thy will be done  
Thy will be done  
Like a child on my knees all that comes to me is  
Thy will be done  
Thy will be done  
Thy will be done

I know you see me  
I know you hear me, Lord



## WEEK TEN – Asking God the Hard Questions

### Monday

*<sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself. <sup>40</sup> All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”*

Matthew 22:37-40 (NIV)

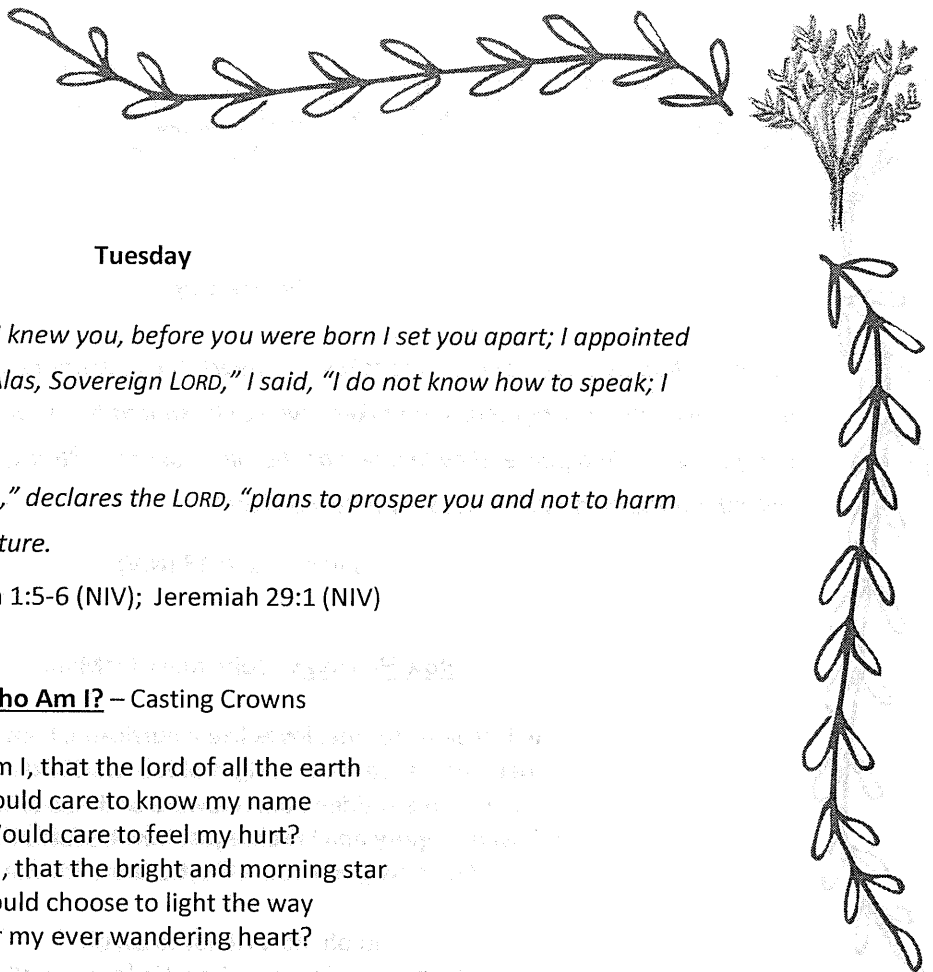
Why am I here? What is my purpose? Why do good people die early? Why Me? Why is life so hard?

These are questions we all struggle with, and they seem to surface repeatedly. The truth, as scripture states in 1 Corinthians 13: although we see dimly or in part now, we shall know fully when God brings us home. God’s ways are not our ways. Jesus tells us we are here to Love God and love His people. I can believe that, as our Savior spells it out very clearly. Throughout my life I have struggled with what God created me to do, what he planned for me. I do believe that he called me to teach voice and that He gifted me for that service. I do feel that I am living out that purpose, but with my mom’s illness and death, I have felt a need to do more and be more – but this time for God, not for people’s approval. God makes us uncomfortable, and I believe he leads us to ask the hard questions.

I think as we experience our journey, questions arise, and God calls us to wrestle with them. That is exactly what I did after my mom’s diagnosis. I knew that she wouldn’t be with us very long, and it spurred me to reflect deeply about the ways I might live out God’s calling in my lifetime. Those reflections were less and less centered on me, and were moving me towards outward service. I must admit that I like being comfortable, but throughout scripture and throughout our lives, I believe that God moves us to a place of questioning and yearning so that His purposes for our lives may be carried out.

This is what led our family to discuss and agree to become certified foster parents. What a crazy idea! I was 47 years old and we were two years from the “empty nest.” What a crazy thought! However I can tell you, to watch the way Ryan came in to our family (lethargic, withdrawn, deeply wounded, and shut down). He had experienced deep neglect and was covered from head to toe in bedbug bites and cockroach bites. I cannot help but see God’s holy hand in bringing Ryan to us.

As life was leaving my mom, life was being revitalized in Ryan. God is amazing in the way he has shared His love for my mom and for Ryan. She was being welcomed home to the arms of Jesus, and Ryan was in our arms, safe! I think of how we went into fostering to help a child experience a rich and full life, and in return Ryan has been a blessing, a joy, and a gift from God Almighty. Our ways are not God’s ways. Though we see dimly now, we shall see fully when He calls us home.



**Tuesday**

<sup>5</sup> "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."<sup>6</sup> "Alas, Sovereign LORD," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am too young."

<sup>11</sup> For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Jeremiah 1:5-6 (NIV); Jeremiah 29:1 (NIV)

**Who Am I? – Casting Crowns**

Who am I, that the lord of all the earth  
Would care to know my name  
Would care to feel my hurt?

Who am I, that the bright and morning star  
Would choose to light the way  
For my ever wandering heart?

Chorus: Not because of who I am  
But because of what you've done  
Not because of what I've done  
But because of who you are

I am a flower quickly fading  
Here today and gone tomorrow  
A wave tossed in the ocean  
A vapor in the wind

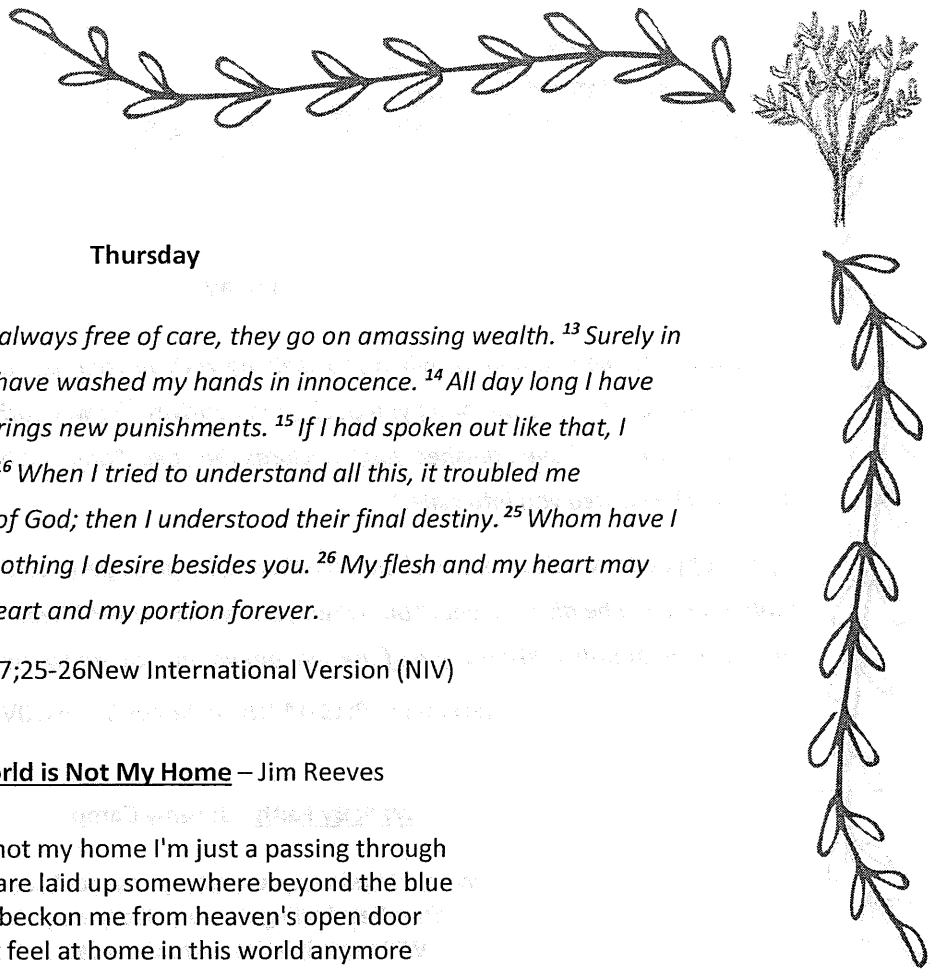
Still you hear me when I'm calling  
Lord, you catch me when I'm falling  
And you've told me who I am

I am yours

Who am I, that the eyes that see my sin  
Would look on me with love  
And watch me rise again?

Who am I, that the voice that calmed the sea  
Would call out through the rain  
And calm the storm in me?

(Repeat Chorus)



Thursday

*<sup>12</sup> This is what the wicked are like— always free of care, they go on amassing wealth. <sup>13</sup> Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and have washed my hands in innocence. <sup>14</sup> All day long I have been afflicted, and every morning brings new punishments. <sup>15</sup> If I had spoken out like that, I would have betrayed your children. <sup>16</sup> When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply <sup>17</sup> till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. <sup>25</sup> Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. <sup>26</sup> My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

Psalm 73:12-17;25-26 New International Version (NIV)

**This World is Not My Home – Jim Reeves**

This world is not my home I'm just a passing through  
My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue

The angels beckon me from heaven's open door  
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore

Oh lord you know I have no friend like you  
If heaven's not my home then lord what will I do  
The angels beckon me from heaven's open door  
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore

I have a loving mother just over in gloryland  
And I don't expect to stop until I shake her hand  
She's waiting now for me in heaven's open door  
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore

Oh lord you know I have no friend like you  
If heaven's not my home Then lord what will I do

The angels beckon me From heaven's open door  
And I can't feel at home In this world anymore

Just over in gloryland

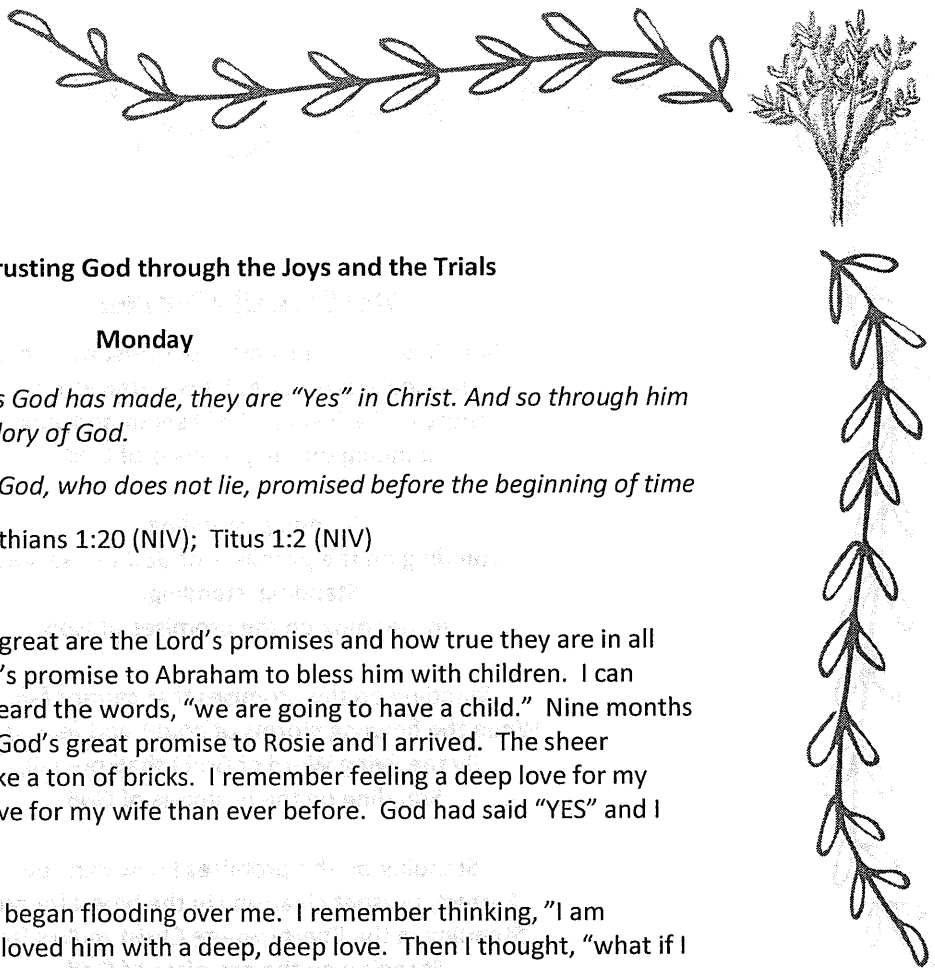
We'll live eternally

The saints on every hand are shouting victory

Their songs of sweetest praise

Drift back from heaven's shore

And I can't feel at home In this world anymore



## WEEK ELEVEN – Trusting God through the Joys and the Trials

### Monday

<sup>20</sup> For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.

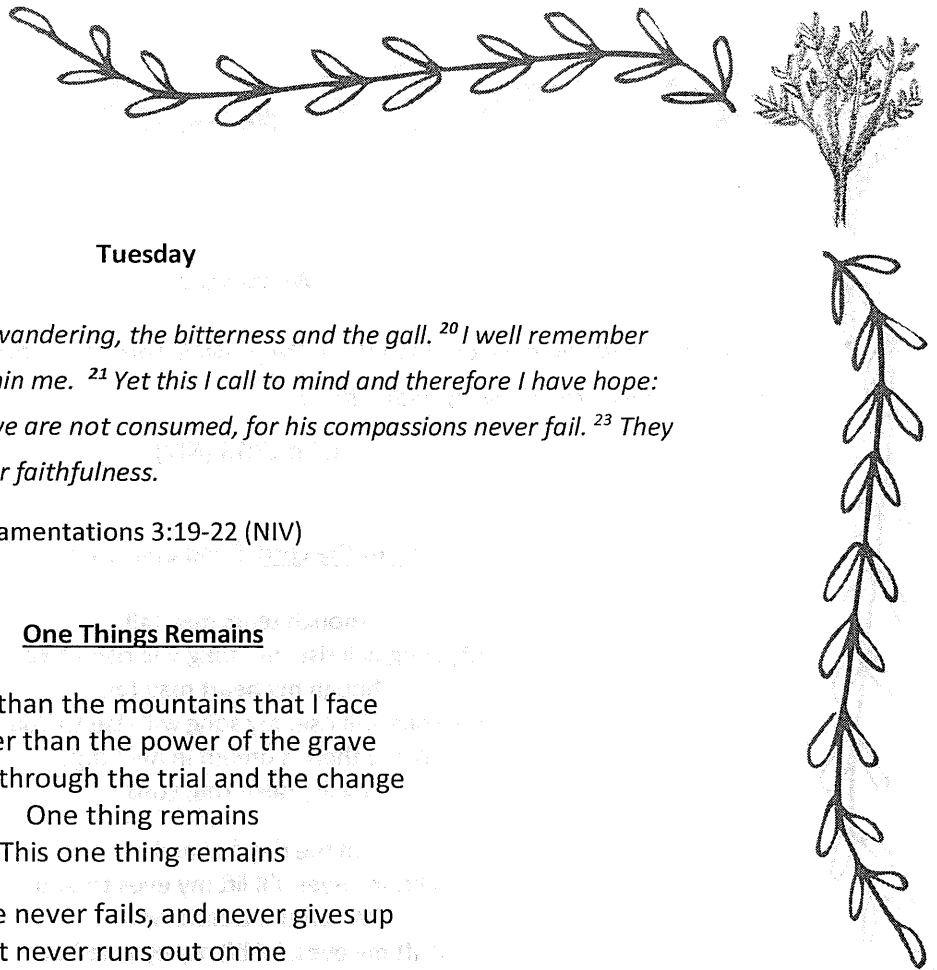
<sup>2</sup> ...in the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time

2 Corinthians 1:20 (NIV); Titus 1:2 (NIV)

God’s “YES” and our “Amen.” How great are the Lord’s promises and how true they are in all our lives. I am keenly aware of God’s promise to Abraham to bless him with children. I can remember what it felt like when I heard the words, “we are going to have a child.” Nine months later Colin came into our lives, and God’s great promise to Rosie and I arrived. The sheer magnitude of having a son hit me like a ton of bricks. I remember feeling a deep love for my son. And I felt a new and deeper love for my wife than ever before. God had said “YES” and I said “Amen.”

When I looked on this son thoughts began flooding over me. I remember thinking, “I am responsible for this little life”, and I loved him with a deep, deep love. Then I thought, “what if I mess him up?” I had no idea how to take care of this little boy. God’s promise and provision slowly became clearer as He taught us through each moment. I believe we as parents are given the blessing of children not only to teach and grow them, but to learn from them.

God’s promise to us and His blessing through my son, Colin, has been in watching his life blossom. Colin has a heart for the Lord and the gifts of mercy and kindness for God’s people who are suffering. I have learned from Colin over and over as he has fed the homeless, comforted broken hearts, and cared for friends who were struggling financially by providing them a meal or a ride. He sees the marginalized and the hurting and wants to help them! He has become a teacher to me and a sign of God’s promises. I am very proud of the young man he is becoming, and I consider him a gift to our family, a gift to my heart. He is a young man who is learning, growing, and seeking the Lord’s will for his life. To say that I am proud and humbled to be his dad is an understatement. God is good and his promises are a resounding YES!



Tuesday

*<sup>19</sup> I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. <sup>20</sup> I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. <sup>21</sup> Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: <sup>22</sup> Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. <sup>23</sup> They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*

Lamentations 3:19-22 (NIV)

**One Things Remains**

Higher than the mountains that I face  
Stronger than the power of the grave  
Constant through the trial and the change

One thing remains  
This one thing remains

Your love never fails, and never gives up  
It never runs out on me  
Your love never fails, and never gives up  
It never runs out on me  
Your love never fails, and never gives up  
It never runs out on me

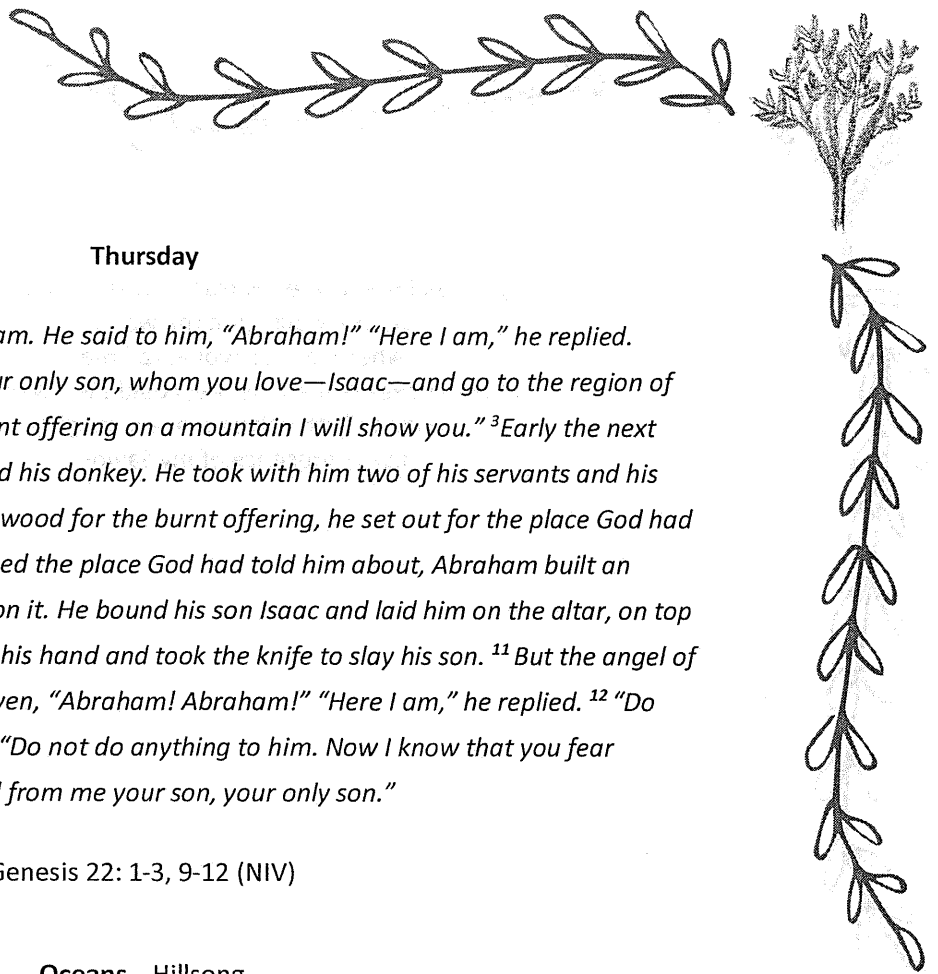
Because on and on and on and on it goes  
Before it overwhelms and satisfies my soul  
And I never, ever, have to be afraid

One thing remains  
This one thing remains

Your love never fails, and never gives up  
It never runs out on me  
Your love never fails, and never gives up  
It never runs out on me  
Your love never fails, and never gives up  
It never runs out on me

Your love

In death, and in life  
I'm confident and covered by the power of your great love  
My debt is paid, there's nothing that can separate  
My heart from Your great love



## Thursday

<sup>1</sup> Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied.

<sup>2</sup> Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you." <sup>3</sup> Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about... <sup>9</sup> When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. <sup>10</sup> Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. <sup>11</sup> But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. <sup>12</sup> "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

Genesis 22: 1-3, 9-12 (NIV)

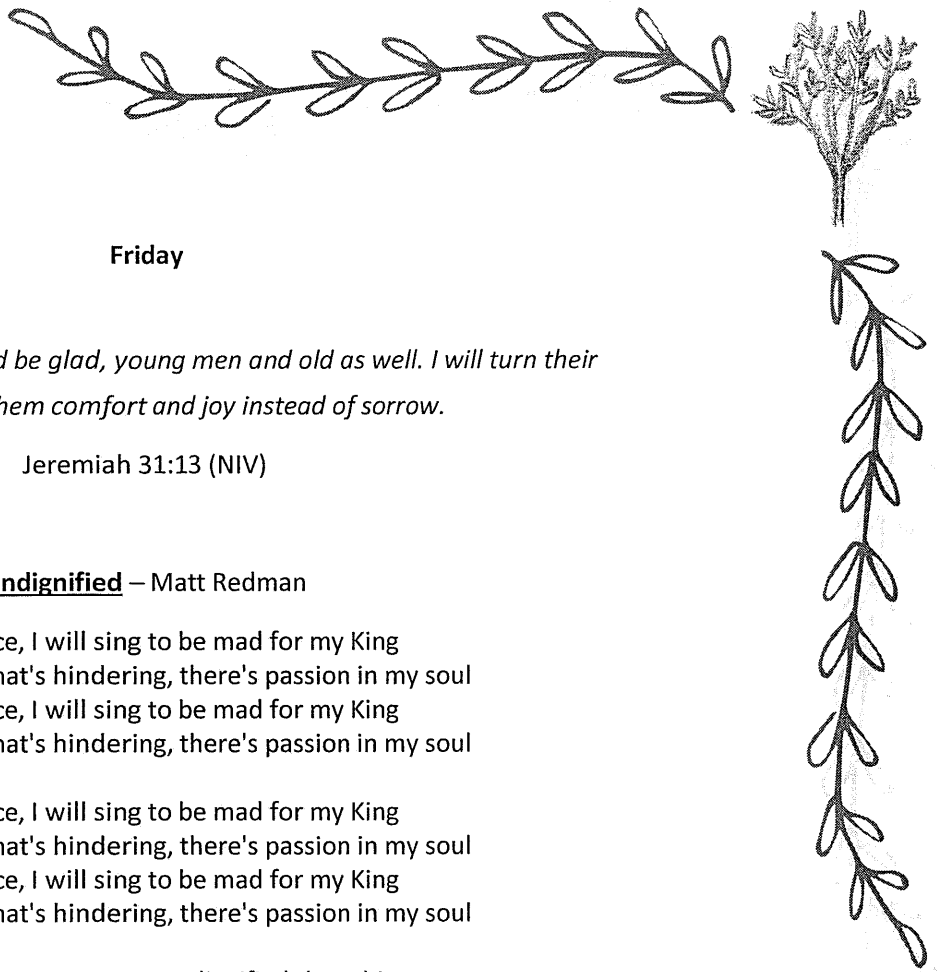
### Oceans – Hillsong

You call me out upon the waters  
The great unknown where feet may fail  
And there I find You in the mystery  
In oceans deep  
My faith will stand

And I will call upon Your name  
And keep my eyes above the waves  
When oceans rise, my soul will rest in Your embrace  
For I am Yours and You are mine

Your grace abounds in deepest waters  
Your sovereign hand  
Will be my guide  
Where feet may fail and fear surrounds me  
You've never failed and You won't start now

So I will call upon Your name  
And keep my eyes above the waves  
When oceans rise, my soul will rest in Your embrace  
For I am Yours and You are mine



Friday

*<sup>13</sup> Then young women will dance and be glad, young men and old as well. I will turn their mourning into gladness; I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow.*

Jeremiah 31:13 (NIV)

**Undignified** – Matt Redman

I will dance, I will sing to be mad for my King  
Nothing more that's hindering, there's passion in my soul  
I will dance, I will sing to be mad for my King  
Nothing more that's hindering, there's passion in my soul

I will dance, I will sing to be mad for my King  
Nothing more that's hindering, there's passion in my soul  
I will dance, I will sing to be mad for my King  
Nothing more that's hindering, there's passion in my soul

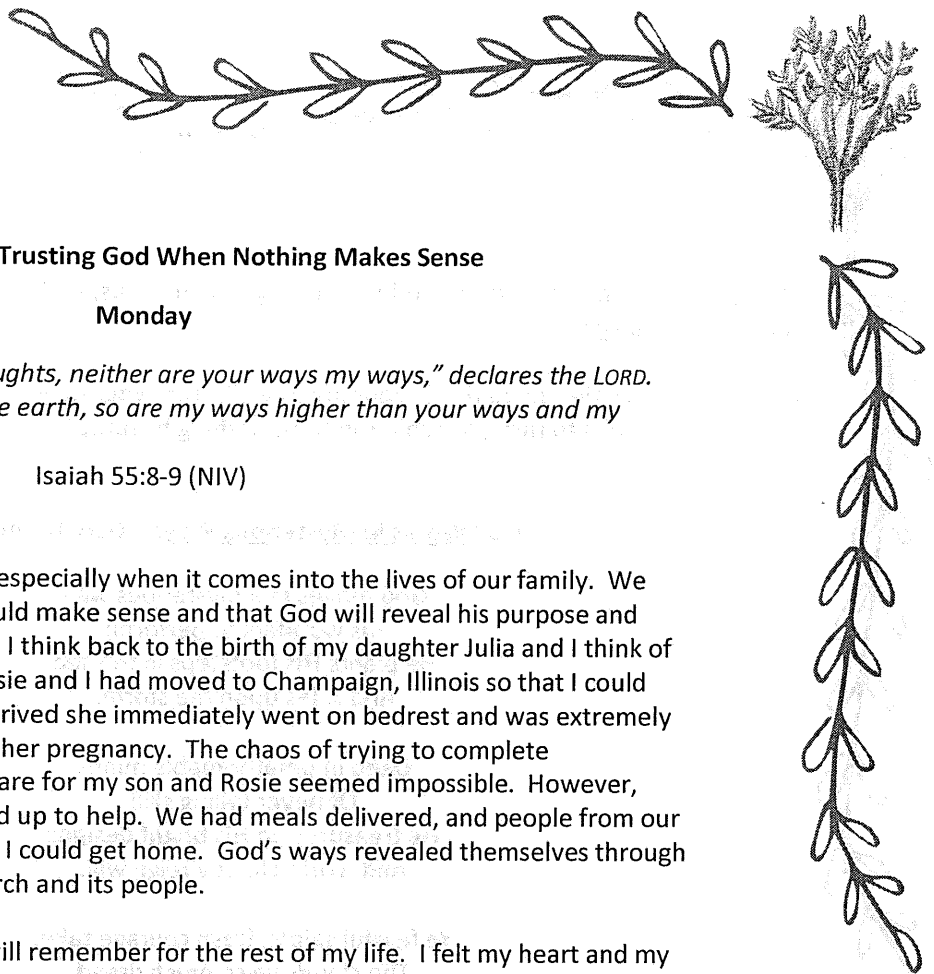
I'll become even more undignified than this  
Some may say it's foolishness  
But I'll become even more undignified than this, oh yes

I will dance, I will sing to be mad for my King  
Nothing more that's hindering, there's passion in my soul  
I will dance, I will sing to be mad for my King  
Nothing more that's hindering, there's passion in my soul

I'll become even more undignified than this  
Some may say it's foolishness  
But I'll become even more undignified than this

It's all for You, my God





## WEEK TWELVE – Trusting God When Nothing Makes Sense

### Monday

<sup>8</sup> *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD.*  
<sup>9</sup> *“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”*

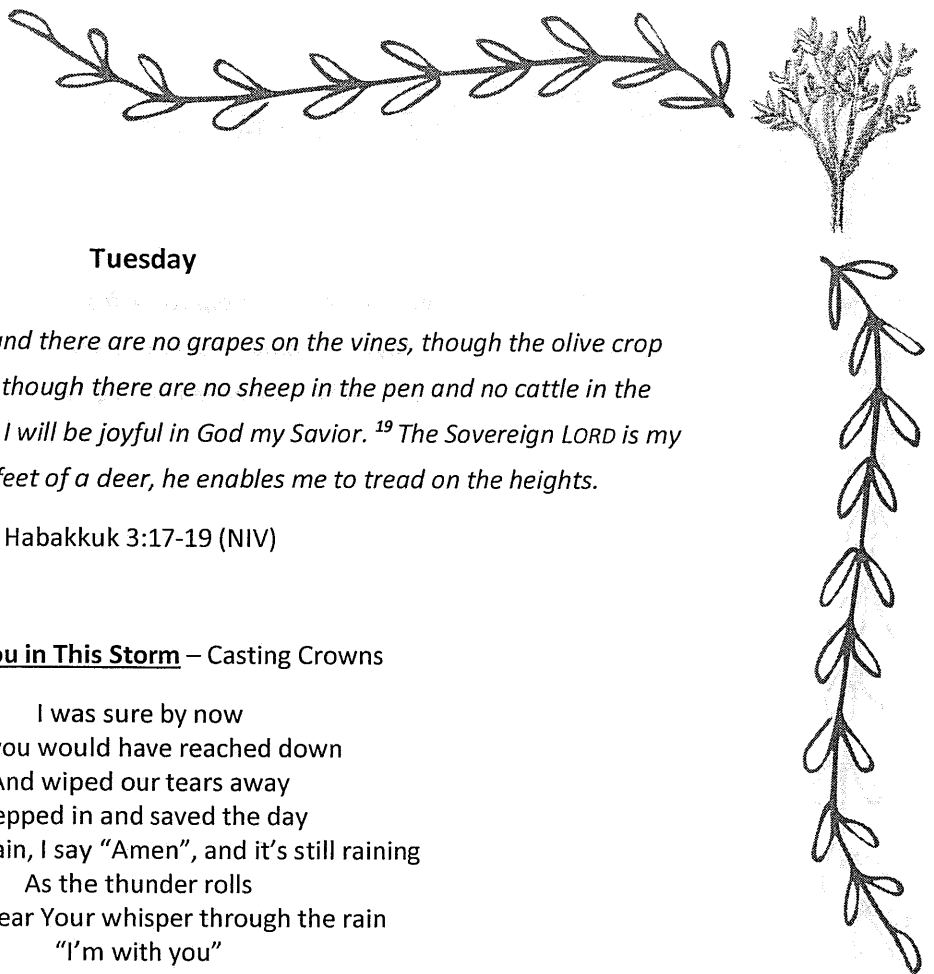
Isaiah 55:8-9 (NIV)

We try to make sense out of chaos, especially when it comes into the lives of our family. We somehow think that everything should make sense and that God will reveal his purpose and plan clearly - and on our time table. I think back to the birth of my daughter Julia and I think of God’s plan coming out of chaos. Rosie and I had moved to Champaign, Illinois so that I could start my doctorate. The week we arrived she immediately went on bedrest and was extremely sick for the remaining six months of her pregnancy. The chaos of trying to complete coursework, then coming home to care for my son and Rosie seemed impossible. However, God’s people and His church stepped up to help. We had meals delivered, and people from our church came to help with Colin until I could get home. God’s ways revealed themselves through the love and outpouring of that church and its people.

The day Julia was born was a day I will remember for the rest of my life. I felt my heart and my love for her in a different way than with Colin. I know it is crazy to say, but that day her life and my hopes for her life flashed in front of me. I began to think about whether she would grow to have a beautiful heart and a kindness for people like her mother. I can remember imagining what it would be like to give her away to her future husband. I could almost feel the joy that I would one day experience dancing with her on her wedding day. It seems strange to share that I felt all these things on the day she was born, but it is not strange to God. He knows all things, sees all things, and has a purpose and a plan for each of us.

I can tell you that my daughter is a young woman now, and she is beautiful both inside and out! She has a kind and gentle heart and is sweet to everyone she meets. She sees people who are uncomfortable or feel out of place and tries to reach out to them. Her life is seen in her infectious smile and laughter. God’s gift to me has been her willingness to give me a big hug whenever I need it. She cheers me and others on when we succeed, while encouraging us in the midst of our failures. She has a gift for words of affirmation and a heart that wants people to feel loved and accepted. I am grateful to be her dad and humbled by God’s blessing through her life.

Fast forward a decade - God’s mysterious ways were at work when he delivered our family to Abilene, Texas. He has lifted our family from a time of chaos, darkness, and a period where not much outward growth could be seen. Praise to Him that He was working to provide inner growth for us. In 2011, one of the most awesome and moving days of my life took place. Colin, Julia, Rosie, and I were all baptized together. I often think of that day as a symbol of God’s unfailing, unrelenting love for the Hollingsworth family. Even though we are flawed, and even



**Tuesday**

*17 Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, <sup>18</sup>yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. <sup>19</sup>The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights.*

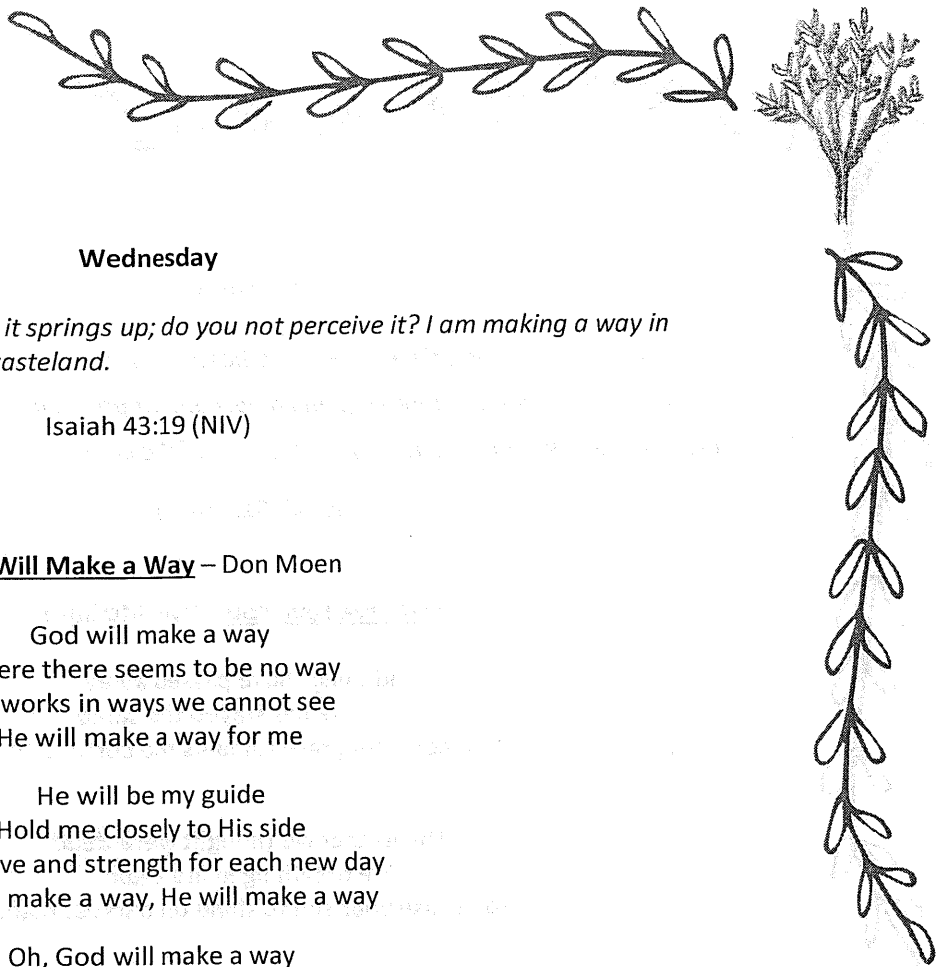
Habakkuk 3:17-19 (NIV)

**Praise You in This Storm** – Casting Crowns

I was sure by now  
God you would have reached down  
And wiped our tears away  
Stepped in and saved the day  
But once again, I say "Amen", and it's still raining  
As the thunder rolls  
I barely hear Your whisper through the rain  
"I'm with you"  
And as You mercy falls  
I raise my hands and praise the God who gives  
And takes away

I'll praise You in this storm  
And I will lift my hands  
For You are who You are  
No matter where I am  
Every tear I've cried  
You hold in Your hand  
You never left my side  
And though my heart is torn  
I will praise You in this storm

I remember when  
I stumbled in the wind  
You heard my cry  
You raised me up again  
My strength is almost gone  
How can I carry on  
If I can't find You  
I lift my eyes unto the hills



Wednesday

*<sup>19</sup> See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.*

Isaiah 43:19 (NIV)

**He Will Make a Way** – Don Moen

God will make a way  
Where there seems to be no way  
He works in ways we cannot see  
He will make a way for me

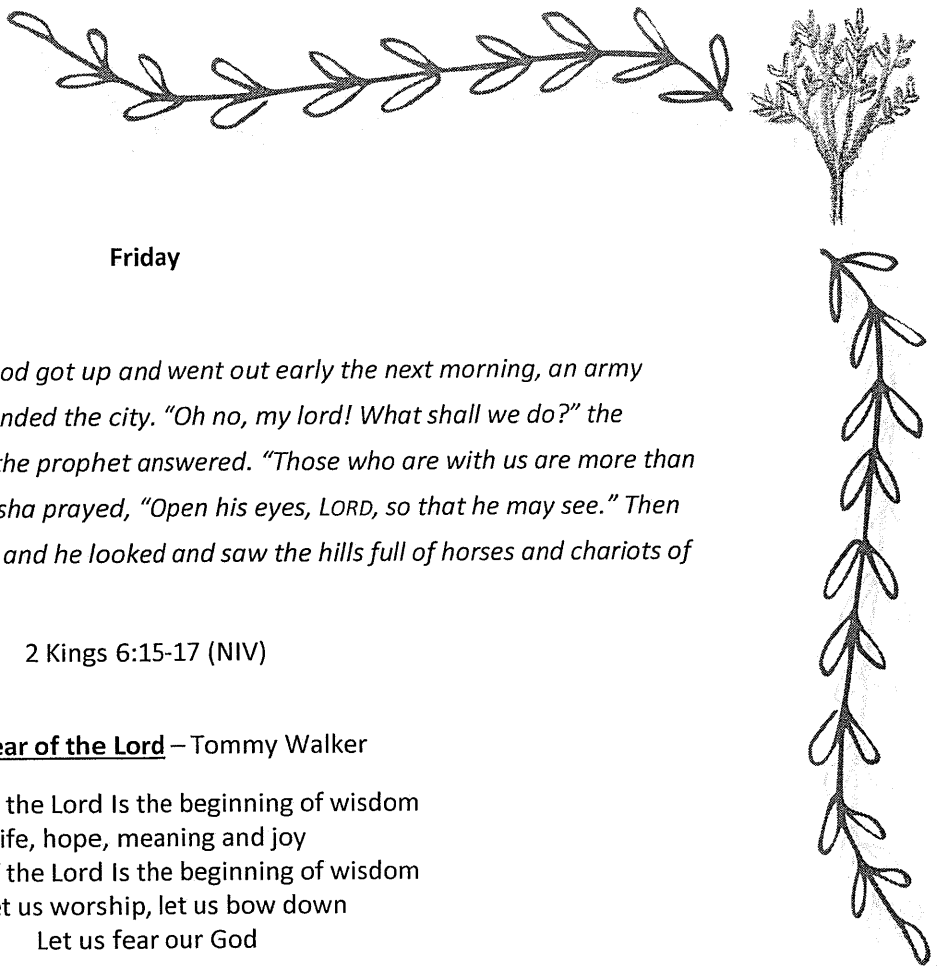
He will be my guide  
Hold me closely to His side  
With love and strength for each new day  
He will make a way, He will make a way

Oh, God will make a way  
Where there seems to be no way  
He works in ways we cannot see  
He will make a way for me

He will be my guide  
Hold me closely to His side  
With love and strength for each new day  
He will make a way, He will make a way

By a roadway in the wilderness, He'll lead me  
And rivers in the desert will I see  
Heaven and Earth will fade but His Word will still remain  
And He will do something new today

Oh, God will make a way  
Where there seems to be no way  
He works in ways we cannot see  
He will make a way for me



**Friday**

*<sup>15</sup> When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?" the servant asked. <sup>16</sup> "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." <sup>17</sup> And Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, LORD, so that he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.*

2 Kings 6:15-17 (NIV)

**The Fear of the Lord – Tommy Walker**

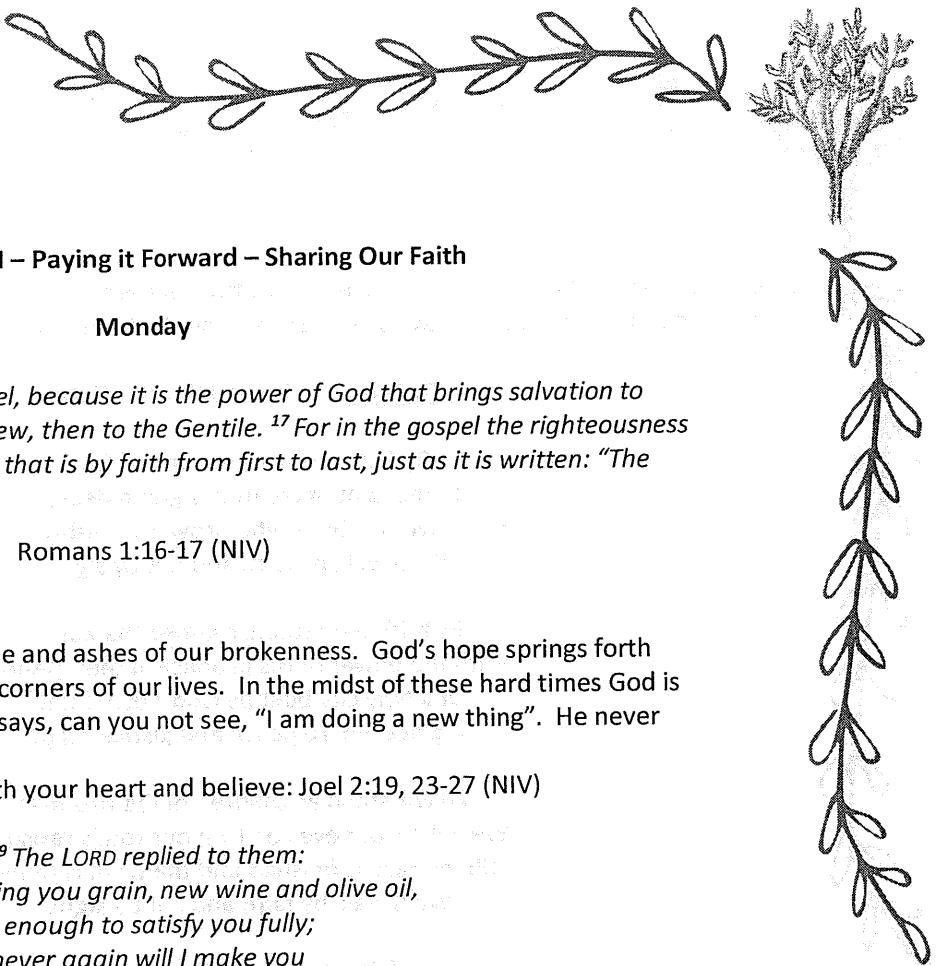
The fear of the Lord Is the beginning of wisdom  
Life, hope, meaning and joy  
The fear of the Lord Is the beginning of wisdom  
So let us worship, let us bow down  
Let us fear our God

The fear of the Lord Is the beginning of wisdom  
Life, hope, blessing and joy  
The fear of the Lord Is the beginning of wisdom  
So let us worship, let us bow down  
Let us fear our God

To Him belongs eternal praise  
Glorious and righteous Are His works,  
His ways To Him belongs all reverent praise

Faithful and just Are His works,  
His ways So let us worship, let us bow down  
Let us fear our God with our whole hearts,  
we will thank You We will praise You oh God

In the congregation, with Your people  
We remember Your works  
So let us worship, let us bow down  
So let us worship, let us bow down  
Let us fear our God



## WEEK THIRTEEN – Paying it Forward – Sharing Our Faith

### Monday

<sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. <sup>17</sup> For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

Romans 1:16-17 (NIV)

God brings purpose out of the rubble and ashes of our brokenness. God’s hope springs forth out of the barren, drought-stricken corners of our lives. In the midst of these hard times God is there and is doing a *new thing*! He says, can you not see, “I am doing a new thing”. He never gives up, He never lets go of us.

Hear this scripture with your heart and believe: Joel 2:19, 23-27 (NIV)

<sup>19</sup> The LORD replied to them:

*“I am sending you grain, new wine and olive oil,  
enough to satisfy you fully;  
never again will I make you  
an object of scorn to the nations.  
Rejoice in the LORD your God,  
for he has given you the autumn rains  
because he is faithful.*

*He sends you abundant showers,  
both autumn and spring rains, as before.*

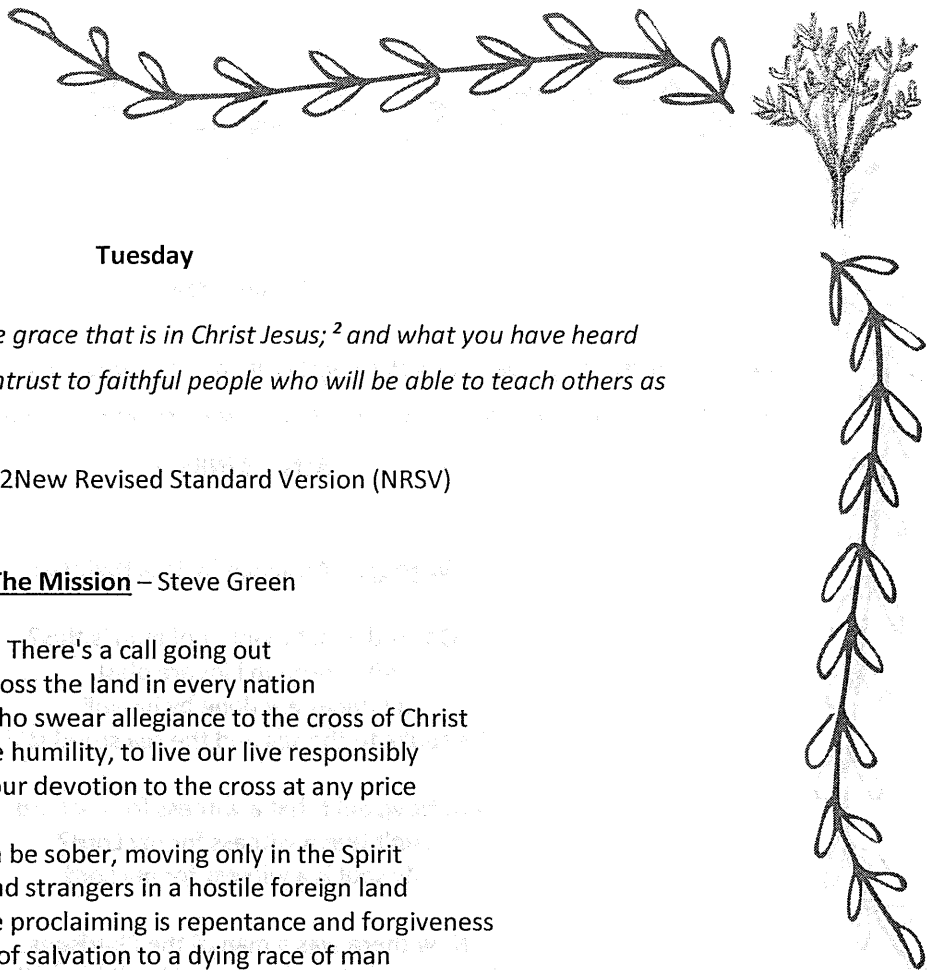
<sup>24</sup> *The threshing floors will be filled with grain;  
the vats will overflow with new wine and oil.*

<sup>25</sup> *“I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten—  
the great locust and the young locust,  
the other locusts and the locust swarm—  
my great army that I sent among you.*

<sup>26</sup> *You will have plenty to eat, until you are full,  
and you will praise the name of the LORD your God,  
who has worked wonders for you;  
never again will my people be shamed.*

<sup>27</sup> *Then you will know that I am in Israel,  
that I am the LORD your God,  
and that there is no other;  
never again will my people be shamed.*

God never gives up on you or me. He loves us with a never-ending love. He can come into the hopeless, helpless, most shameful, and darkest parts of our lives and restore us, heal us, and



**Tuesday**

<sup>1</sup> You then, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; <sup>2</sup> and what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well.

2 Timothy 2:1-2 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

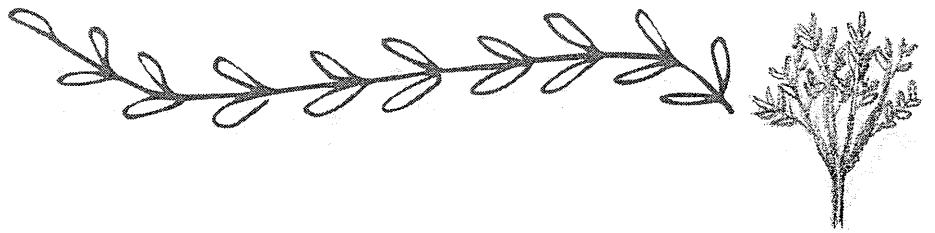
**The Mission** – Steve Green

There's a call going out  
Across the land in every nation  
A call to those who swear allegiance to the cross of Christ  
A call to true humility, to live our lives responsibly  
To deepen our devotion to the cross at any price

Let us then be sober, moving only in the Spirit  
As aliens and strangers in a hostile foreign land  
The message we're proclaiming is repentance and forgiveness  
The offer of salvation to a dying race of man

To love the Lord our God  
Is the heartbeat of our mission  
The spring from which our service overflows  
Across the street  
Or around the world  
The mission's still the same  
Proclaim and live the Truth  
In Jesus' name

As a candle is consumed by the passion of the flame  
Spilling light unsparingly throughout a darkened room  
Let us burn to know Him deeper  
Then our service flaming bright  
Will radiate his passions  
And blaze with holy light

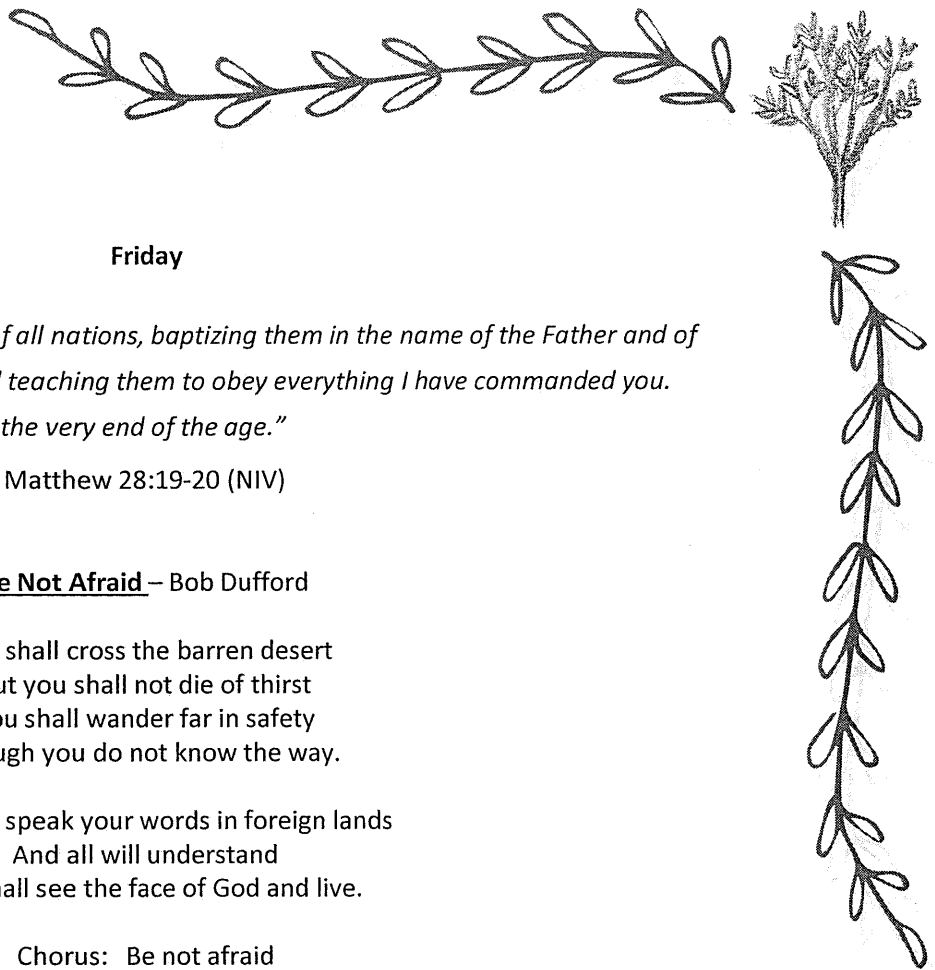


Samson said: "Cut off my hair,  
shave my head as you clean your hand  
and my strength will become like a natural man".

Old Samson was a witness for my Lord.  
My soul is a witness for my Lord.

There's another witness for my Lord. (3 v.)  
My soul is a witness for my Lord.





**Friday**

*<sup>19</sup> 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, <sup>20</sup> 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 (NIV)

**Be Not Afraid** – Bob Dufford

You shall cross the barren desert  
But you shall not die of thirst  
You shall wander far in safety  
Though you do not know the way.

You shall speak your words in foreign lands  
And all will understand  
You shall see the face of God and live.

Chorus: Be not afraid  
I go before you always  
Come follow Me  
And I shall give you rest.

If you pass through raging waters  
In the sea, you shall not drown  
If you walk amidst the burning flames  
You shall not be harmed.

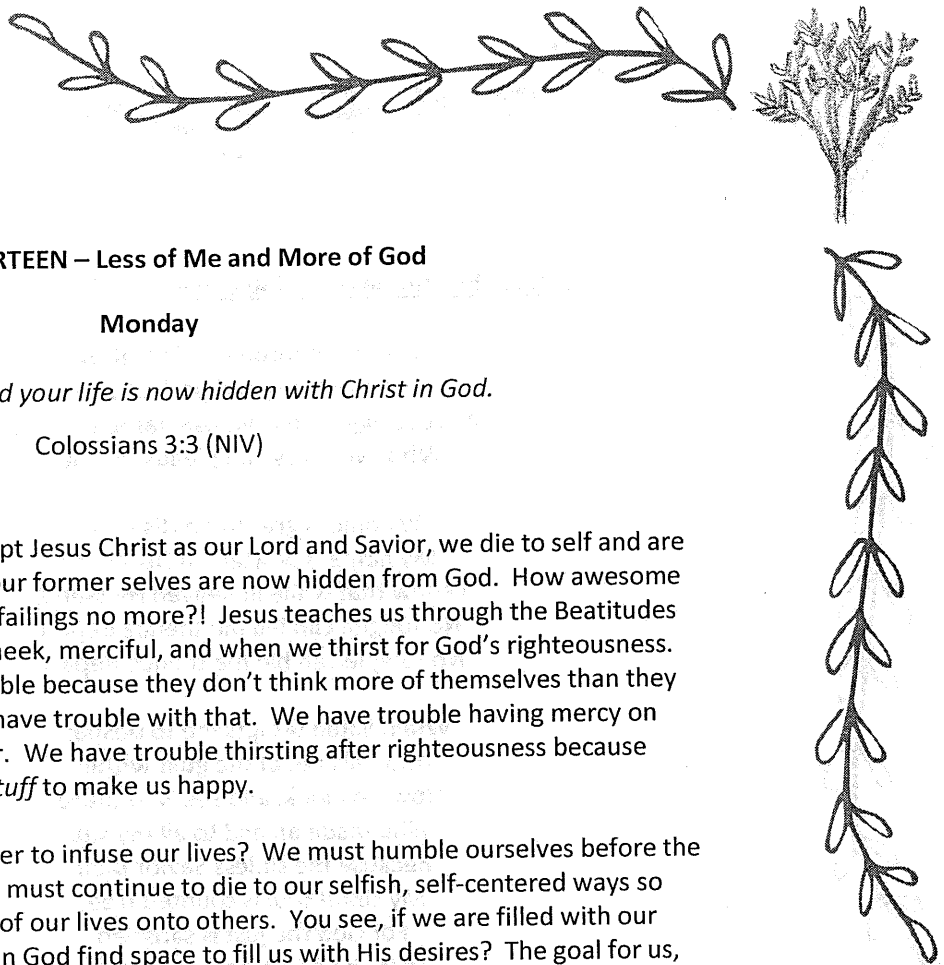
If you stand before the pow'r of hell  
And death is at your side  
Know that I am with you, through it all.

(Repeat Chorus)

Blessed are your poor  
For the Kingdom shall be theirs  
Blest are you that weep and mourn  
for one day you shall laugh.

And if wicked men insult and hate you  
All because of Me  
Blessed, blessed are you





## WEEK FOURTEEN – Less of Me and More of God

### Monday

<sup>3</sup> *For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.*

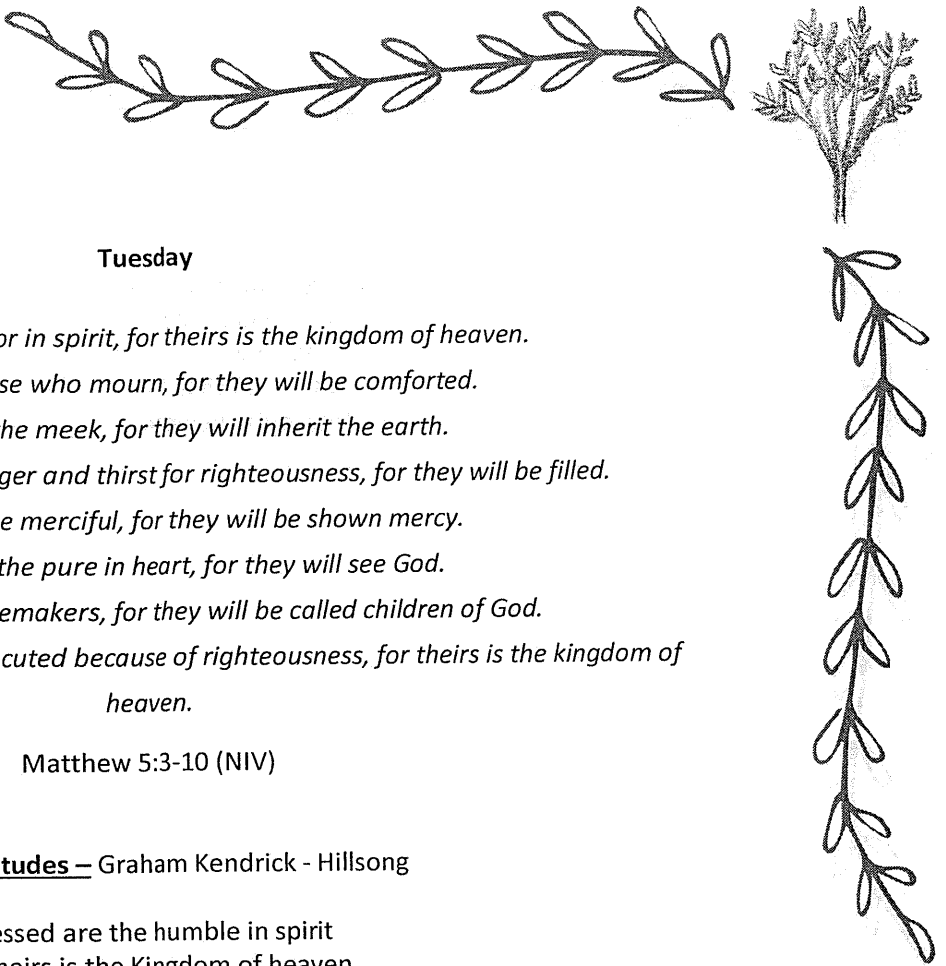
Colossians 3:3 (NIV)

When we confess our sins and accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we die to self and are born again in Christ. Our sins and our former selves are now hidden from God. How awesome is it that God sees our sins and our failings no more?! Jesus teaches us through the Beatitudes that we are blessed when we are meek, merciful, and when we thirst for God's righteousness. The meek are teachable and moldable because they don't think more of themselves than they should. They put others first. We have trouble with that. We have trouble having mercy on those we deem should know better. We have trouble thirsting after righteousness because we're too busy thirsting for more *stuff* to make us happy.

How do we strive for God's character to infuse our lives? We must humble ourselves before the Lord and ask Him to take over. We must continue to die to our selfish, self-centered ways so that God can pour good things out of our lives onto others. You see, if we are filled with our own ambitions and desires, how can God find space to fill us with His desires? The goal for us, the Redeemed, is when life's pressures squeeze us to the bursting point, that which flows out is kindness and goodness, and the great love our God has poured into us.

Jesus shows us that we must not judge others, but instead love each other in the way that the Father has shown love to us. When we begin to die to our old ways and allow God to fill us with His Mighty Spirit, then we ourselves diminish and God becomes much more.

Great and Mighty Father, I pray that you will become more and I will become less. May you, oh God, rise to prominence because of the transformation of our lives that only You can accomplish.



**Tuesday**

- <sup>3</sup> *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
- <sup>4</sup> *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*
- <sup>5</sup> *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*
- <sup>6</sup> *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*
- <sup>7</sup> *Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*
- <sup>8</sup> *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*
- <sup>9</sup> *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*
- <sup>10</sup> *Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Matthew 5:3-10 (NIV)

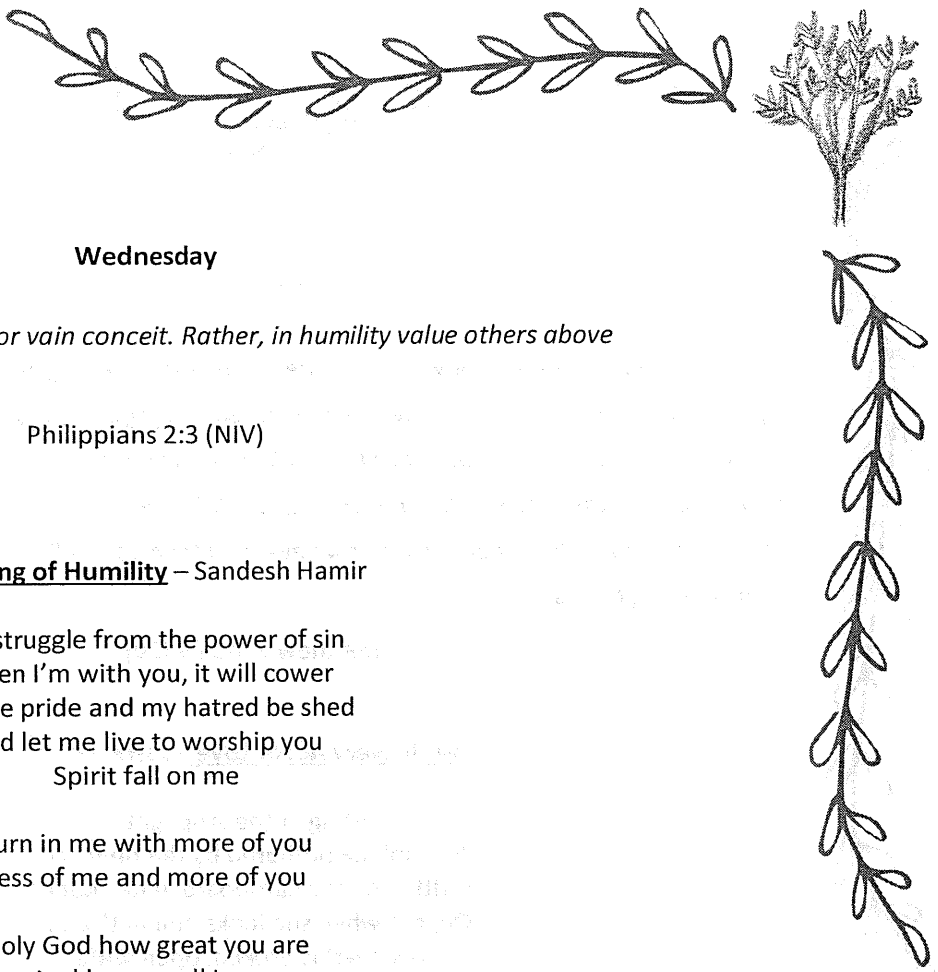
**The Beatitudes – Graham Kendrick - Hillsong**

Blessed are the humble in spirit  
For theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.  
And blessed are the mourners  
They will find comfort.  
And blessed are the lowly,  
They shall reign  
On the earth.

Oh how you bless us Lord!  
Blessing upon blessing Lord!  
Making us a blessing,  
A blessing for the world.

And blessed are those who hunger,  
Who thirst for justice,  
For surely you'll fill them completely.  
And those who show mercy  
Will be shown mercy.  
And blessed are the pure hearts,  
They'll see God,  
They'll see God.

And blessed are peacemakers,  
Called the sons of God  
Blessed are those oppressed



Wednesday

<sup>3</sup> Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves

Philippians 2:3 (NIV)

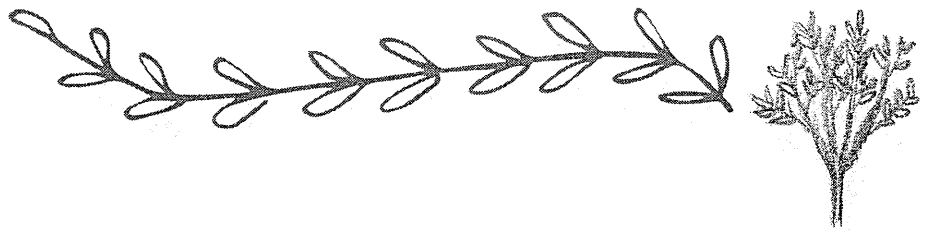
**My Song of Humility** – Sandesh Hamir

As I struggle from the power of sin  
When I'm with you, it will cover  
Let me pride and my hatred be shed  
And let me live to worship you  
Spirit fall on me

Burn in me with more of you  
Less of me and more of you

Holy God how great you are  
And how small I am

Help me to be much more like you  
Cleanse my heart and make it new  
Holy God how great you are  
And how small I am

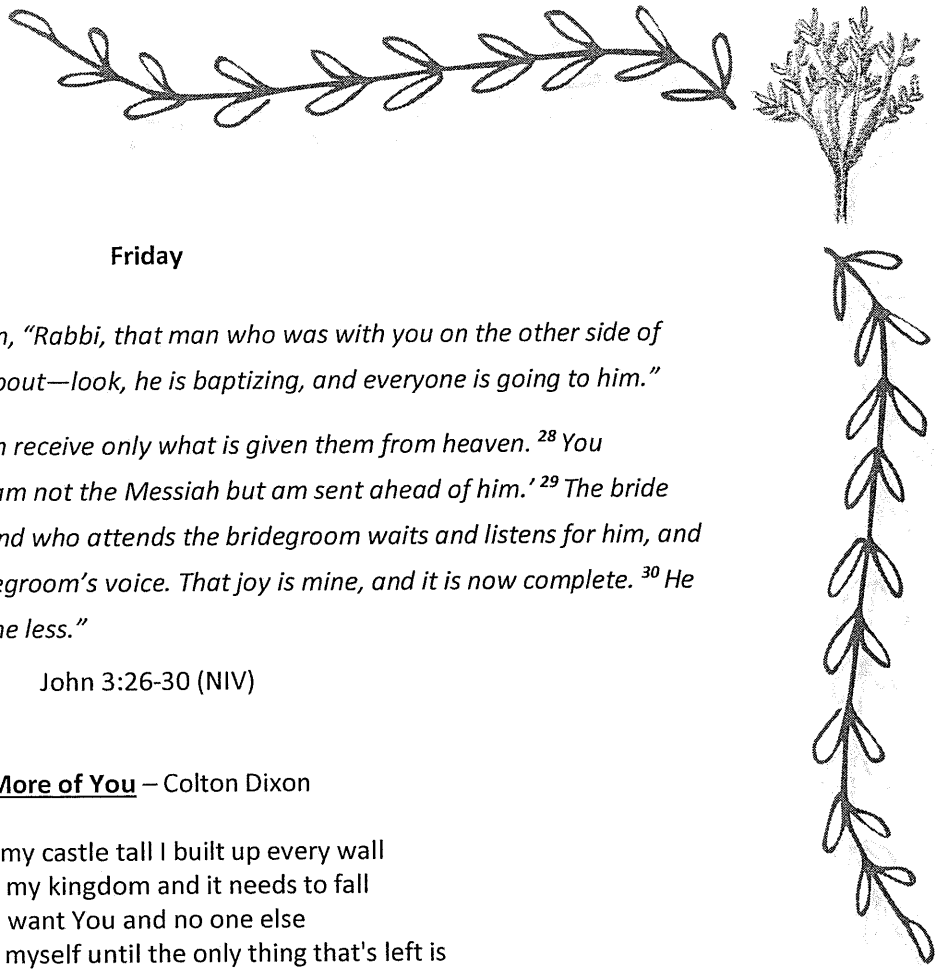


Alive in us, Your light shines through  
With every act of love  
We bring the kingdom come

God put a million, million doors in the world  
For His love to walk through  
One of those doors is you  
I said, God put a million, million doors in the world  
For His love to walk through  
One of those doors is you

We bring the kingdom come  
(Oh oh oh-oh oh oh oh)  
With every act of love  
Jesus, help us carry You  
Alive in us, Your light shines through  
With every act of love  
We bring the kingdom come





**Friday**

*<sup>26</sup> They came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him.”*

*<sup>27</sup> To this John replied, “A person can receive only what is given them from heaven. <sup>28</sup> You yourselves can testify that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him.’ <sup>29</sup> The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom’s voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. <sup>30</sup> He must become greater; I must become less.”*

John 3:26-30 (NIV)

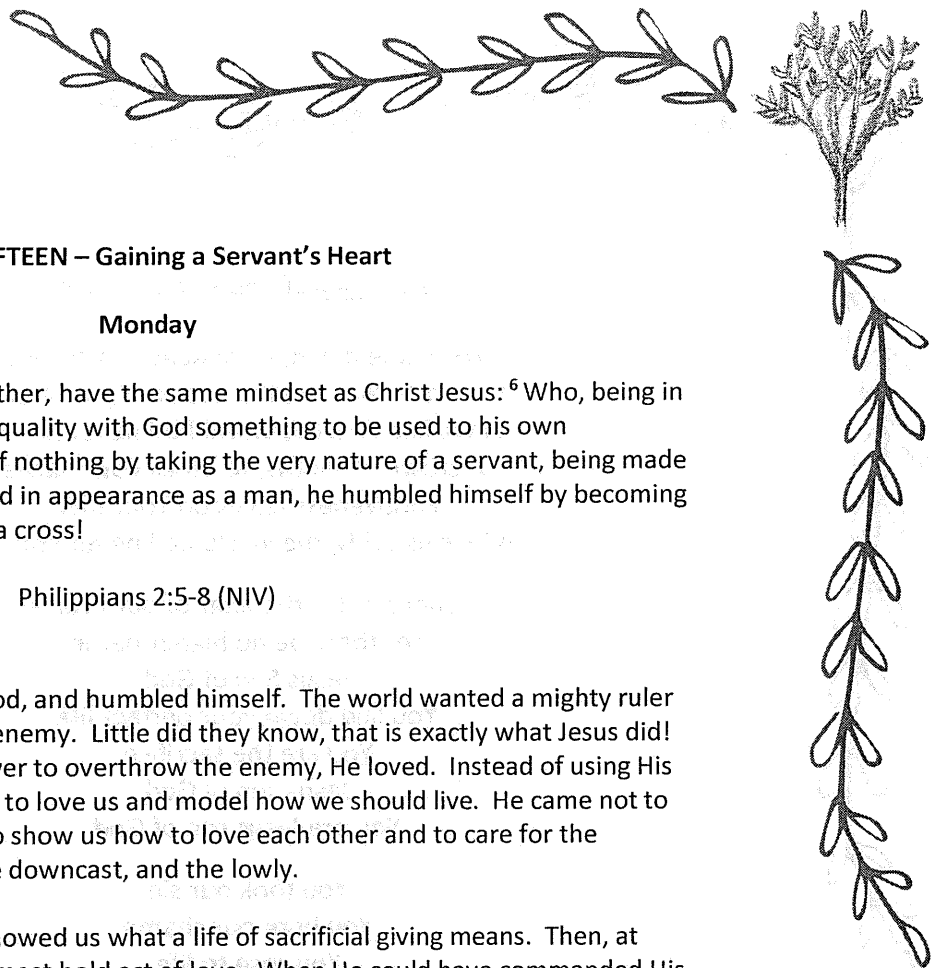
**More of You – Colton Dixon**

I made my castle tall I built up every wall  
This is my kingdom and it needs to fall  
I want You and no one else  
Empty me of myself until the only thing that's left is

More of You Less of me  
Make me who I'm meant to be  
You're all I want all I need You're everything  
Take it all I surrender Be my king  
God I choose More of You Less of me

This life I hold so close Oh, God I let it go  
I refuse to gain the world and lose my soul  
So take it all I abandon everything I am You can have it  
The only thing I need is

More of You Less of me  
Make me who I'm meant to be  
You're all I want all I need You're everything  
Take it all I surrender Be my king  
God I choose More of You Less of me



## WEEK FIFTEEN – Gaining a Servant’s Heart

### Monday

<sup>5</sup> In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;<sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

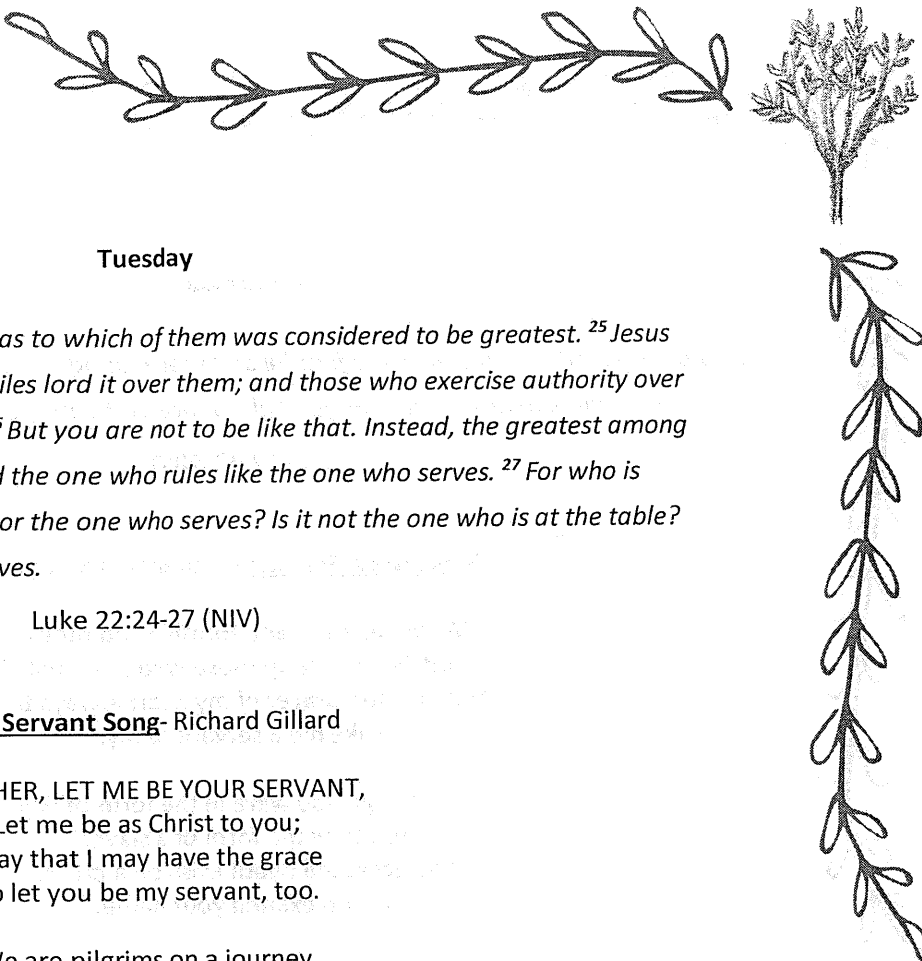
#### Philippians 2:5-8 (NIV)

He came to this earth, the son of God, and humbled himself. The world wanted a mighty ruler who would come and conquer the enemy. Little did they know, that is exactly what Jesus did! Instead of wielding his physical power to overthrow the enemy, He loved. Instead of using His might to force his agenda, he chose to love us and model how we should live. He came not to be served, but to serve. He came to show us how to love each other and to care for the brokenhearted, the overlooked, the downcast, and the lowly.

He came to serve, and in serving, showed us what a life of sacrificial giving means. Then, at Calvary He showed us his final and most bold act of love. When He could have commanded His armies of angels to act, instead He was obedient to the Father, obedient to His will. He humbled himself on that cross and stretched His arms wide for all of humanity, for you and for me! Jesus took every sin for all of time upon Him – how dark and heavy that must have been; what an inconceivable weight! We have no words to describe it.

Jesus bore the weight of the darkness that engulfs all of our lives. He took it all. “Greater Love hath no man” than what Jesus did for us! How deep the Father’s love for us; how vast beyond all measure, that He would give his only Son to a make a wretch (you and I) His treasure!

Sing the praises of the Redeemer!  
Use every gift to lift our Savior higher and higher!  
Singers, rejoice!  
Sing a new song!  
Sing the song of the Redeemed!



## Tuesday

<sup>24</sup> A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. <sup>26</sup> But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. <sup>27</sup> For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

Luke 22:24-27 (NIV)

### The Servant Song- Richard Gillard

BROTHER, LET ME BE YOUR SERVANT,

Let me be as Christ to you;  
Pray that I may have the grace  
To let you be my servant, too.

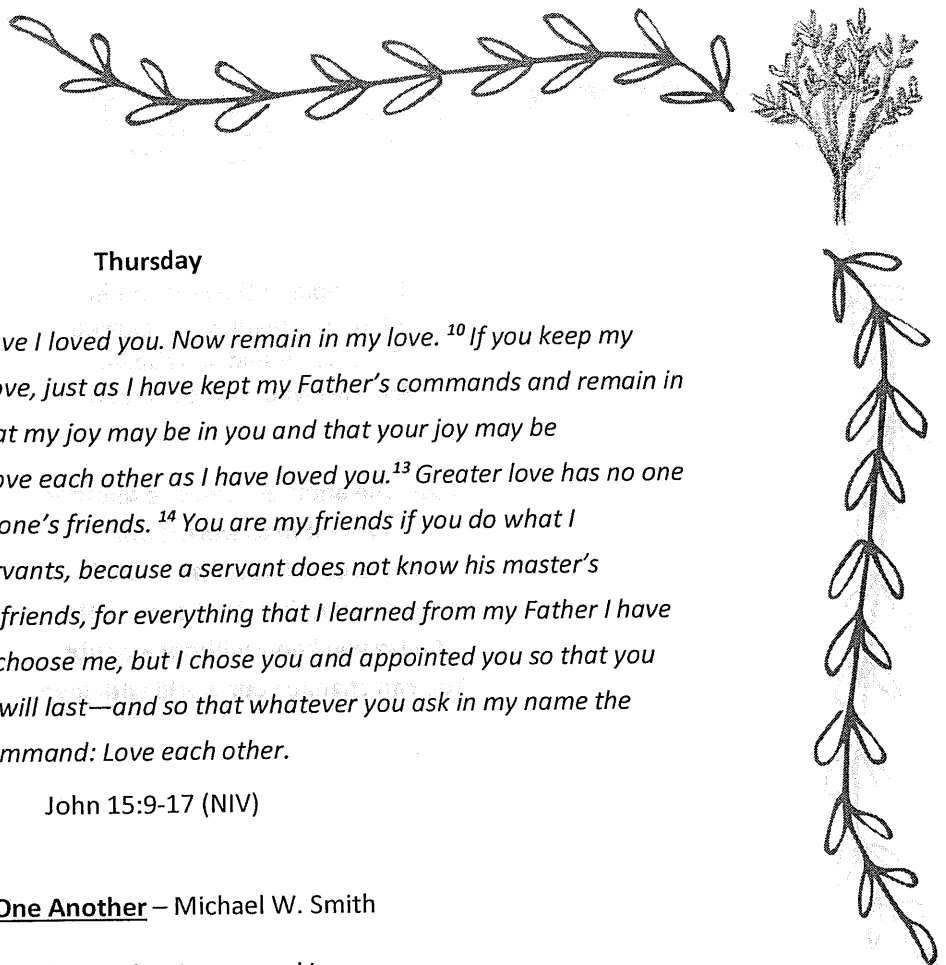
We are pilgrims on a journey,  
We are brothers on the road;  
We are here to help each other  
Walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christlight for you  
In the night-time of your fear;  
I will hold my hand out to you,  
Speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping,  
When you laugh I'll laugh with you;  
I will share your joy and sorrow  
Till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven  
We shall find such harmony,  
Born of all we've known together  
Of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, let me be your servant,  
Let me be as Christ to you;  
Pray that I may have the grace  
To let you be my servant, too.



## Thursday

<sup>9</sup> "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. <sup>10</sup> If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. <sup>11</sup> I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. <sup>12</sup> My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command. <sup>15</sup> I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. <sup>17</sup> This is my command: Love each other.

John 15:9-17 (NIV)

### Love One Another – Michael W. Smith

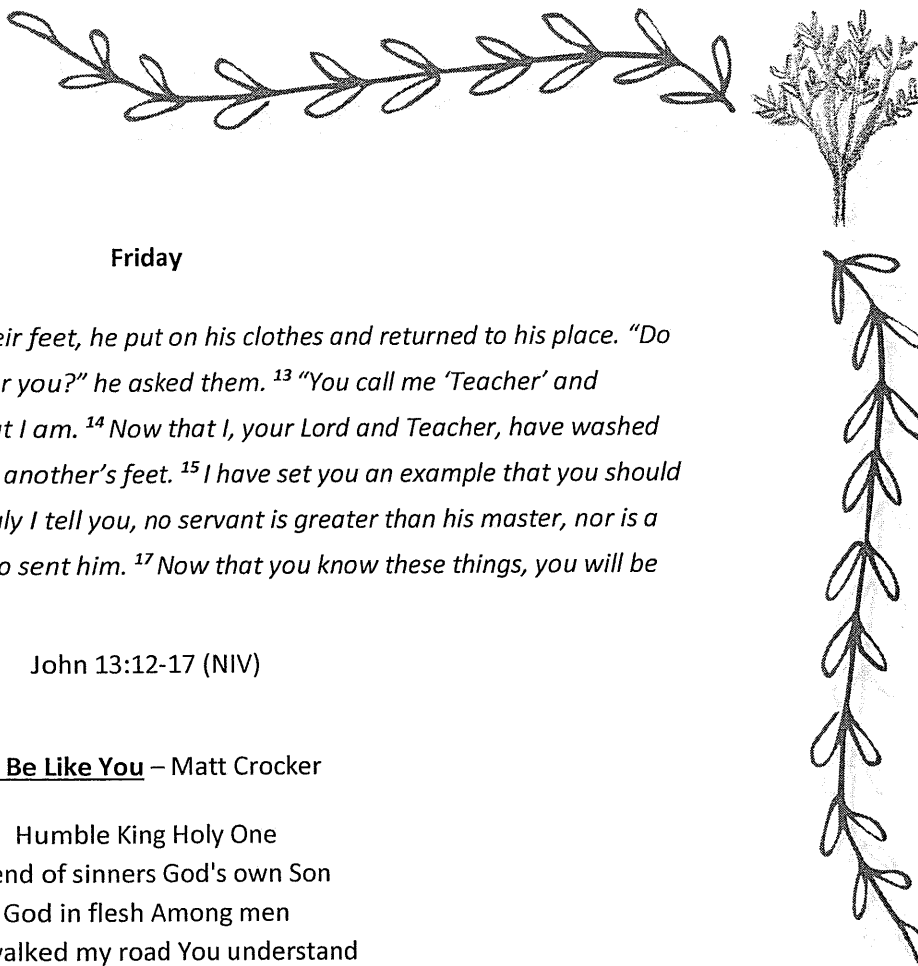
I had a dream that I was speaking  
With a prophet from the land of wise  
In a crowd of people from the land of troubled hearts  
I said, "We've come here for answers -  
A solution to our world's demise"  
He said the journey would be long  
But here's where you start

Love one another, love one another  
Work it in to work it out  
There could never be enough  
Love one another, love one another  
Cause you know without a doubt  
You can change your world with love

It was a simple conclusion  
But I thought that it was rather profound  
Just a fundamental law that we should all live by  
I took it in to tomorrow Yeah, I walked the earth but I never found  
Any corner of the world Where this did not apply

And looking out I saw no method to the madness there  
Like in a vision from the Isle of Patmos, I was scared  
It was a revelation Love is getting rare





**Friday**

*<sup>12</sup> When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. <sup>13</sup> "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. <sup>14</sup> Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup> I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. <sup>16</sup> Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. <sup>17</sup> Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.*

John 13:12-17 (NIV)

**To Be Like You – Matt Crocker**

Humble King Holy One  
Friend of sinners God's own Son  
God in flesh Among men  
You walked my road You understand

Servant King Friend to me  
You saved my soul Washed my feet  
Here I'll bow Give all to You  
Lord I want To be like You

All I want All I need  
More of You Less of me  
Take this life Lord it's Yours  
Have my heart Have it all

I will walk In Your ways  
Love Your word Seek Your face  
My reward My sole pursuit  
To know You more To be like You

Jesus Jesus  
All I want is to be like You

