



WHERE LIFE & PURPOSE CONNECT

Grow, Pray, Study for the Week of March 15, 2026

Prayer for the Week

Loving God, Quiet my heart and open my mind as I spend this time with you. Help me hear your Word and receive your grace. Teach me to love and care for others as members of Christ's family and guide me to live this day in your presence. Amen.

Monday, March 16

Scripture: John 19:17–27

Carrying his cross by himself, he went out to a place called Skull Place (in Aramaic, Golgotha). That's where they crucified him—and two others with him, one on each side and Jesus in the middle. Pilate had a public notice written and posted on the cross. It read "Jesus the Nazarene, the king of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city and it was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek. Therefore, the Jewish chief priests complained to Pilate, "Don't write, 'The king of the Jews' but 'This man said, "I am the king of the Jews.'""

Pilate answered, "What I've written, I've written."

When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and his sandals, and divided them into four shares, one for each soldier. His shirt was seamless, woven as one piece from the top to the bottom. They said to each other, "Let's not tear it. Let's cast lots to see who will get it." This was to fulfill the scripture,

*They divided my clothes among themselves,
and they cast lots for my clothing.*

That's what the soldiers did.

Jesus' mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene stood near the cross. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

Observation

John's account of the crucifixion includes a deeply personal moment not recorded in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). While those Gospels focus on the broader events surrounding Jesus' death, John highlights a scene at the foot of the cross involving

Jesus' mother and the "disciple whom he loved," traditionally understood to be John himself.

In the ancient world, widowed women depended heavily on family members for protection and provision. With Joseph likely deceased and Jesus about to die, Mary's future would have been uncertain. From the cross, Jesus entrusts Mary to the beloved disciple and the disciple to Mary, forming a new household.

This moment reveals something central to John's theology. Throughout his Gospel, Jesus is not only revealing God's glory but also creating a new community of believers. Even in the agony of crucifixion, Jesus is attentive to human relationships. The cross becomes the birthplace of a new family, one defined not by blood but by love and faithfulness.

Application

Church is more than a place we attend; it is a family to which we belong. Jesus calls us to care for one another in practical ways. Who in your church or community might need support today? Perhaps you know someone who is grieving, isolated, or overwhelmed. Consider reaching out to them with a phone call, a meal, a note of encouragement, or simply your presence. Sometimes the most powerful witness of faith is the quiet act of showing up for someone in need.

Prayer

Jesus, thank you for forming us into a family of faith. Help me see the people around me as my siblings in Christ entrusted to my care. Teach me to love as you love. Amen.

Tuesday, March 17

Scripture: John 2:1–12

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration. When the wine ran out, Jesus' mother said to him, "They don't have any wine."

Jesus replied, "Woman, what does that have to do with me? My time hasn't come yet."

His mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Nearby were six stone water jars used for the Jewish cleansing ritual, each able to hold about twenty or thirty gallons.

Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water," and they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Now draw some from them and take it to the headwaiter," and they did. The headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine. He didn't know where it came from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew.

The headwaiter called the groom and said, "Everyone serves the good wine first. They bring out the second-rate wine only when the guests are drinking freely. You kept the good wine until now." This was the first miraculous sign that Jesus did in Cana of Galilee. He revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

After this, Jesus and his mother, his brothers, and his disciples went down to Capernaum and stayed there for a few days.

Observation

At the wedding in Cana, John records the first “sign” of Jesus’ ministry, turning water into wine. John’s Gospel differs from the Synoptics in that it structures Jesus’ ministry around several signs that reveal his divine identity and point to deeper spiritual truths.

Mary plays an important role in this story. When the wine runs out, she brings the problem to Jesus and tells the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” Her quiet trust demonstrates faith even before Jesus begins his public ministry.

John often presents relationships as spaces where faith emerges. The miracle happens in the context of a community celebration, a wedding feast. This reminds us that God’s grace is revealed not only in grand moments but also in ordinary human gatherings. Mary’s presence at both Cana and the cross forms a meaningful frame around Jesus’ ministry in John’s Gospel. She is there at the beginning and the end, witnessing the unfolding of God’s work.

Application

Faith often grows through relationships and everyday moments. Like Mary, we can bring the needs of our community to Jesus. Think about the spaces where you spend your daily life, at home, work, church, your neighborhood. How might God be at work in those places? Ask yourself how you can help bring Christ’s presence into those relationships.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, help me trust you in the ordinary moments of life. Open my eyes to see how you are working through relationships and community. Amen.

Wednesday, March 18

Scripture: Ephesians 3:14–21

This is why I kneel before the Father. Every ethnic group in heaven or on earth is recognized by him. I ask that he will strengthen you in your inner selves from the riches of his glory through the Spirit. I ask that Christ will live in your hearts through faith. As a result of having strong roots in love, I ask that you’ll have the power to grasp love’s width and length, height and depth, together with all believers. I ask that you’ll know the love of Christ that is beyond knowledge so that you will be filled entirely with the fullness of God. Glory to God, who is able to do far beyond all that we could ask or imagine by his power at work within us; glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus for all generations, forever and always. Amen.

Observation

In this prayer, the apostle Paul describes the church as a community rooted and grounded in love. Though written decades after Jesus’ ministry, Paul’s vision echoes what we see unfolding at the cross in John’s Gospel, a community formed through Christ’s love.

The early Christian communities were incredibly diverse. Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, men and women gathered together as one body. This unity was remarkable in the ancient world, where social divisions were deeply entrenched. Paul prays that believers would grasp the vast dimensions of Christ's love, its width, length, height, and depth. Such love is not abstract but becomes visible in the way believers care for one another.

Application

Being part of the church means learning to live in love with people who may be very different from us. That can sometimes be challenging, but it is also one of the greatest testimonies to the gospel. Consider how you might strengthen the bonds of community around you. Perhaps it means offering forgiveness, extending hospitality, or building relationships with someone new.

Prayer

God of love, root my life deeply in Christ's love so that I may share that love with others. Help our community reflect the grace you have given the Messiah Church family. Amen.

Thursday, March 19

Scripture: John 10:7–12

So Jesus spoke again, "I assure you that I am the gate of the sheep. All who came before me were thieves and outlaws, but the sheep didn't listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief enters only to steal, kill, and destroy. I came so that they could have life—indeed, so that they could live life to the fullest.

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. When the hired hand sees the wolf coming, he leaves the sheep and runs away. That's because he isn't the shepherd; the sheep aren't really his. So the wolf attacks the sheep and scatters them.

Observation

John's Gospel contains several "I Am" statements that reveal Jesus' identity. In this passage, Jesus says, "I am the gate for the sheep," and later describes himself as the good shepherd. Unlike the Synoptic Gospels, John frequently uses these metaphorical statements to reveal deeper theological truths. The image of the shepherd would have been familiar to Jesus' listeners. Shepherds protected their flocks from predators and danger, often at great personal risk. Jesus contrasts himself with hired hands who abandon the sheep when danger comes. A true shepherd remains and protects the flock. This imagery reinforces the idea of community. The sheep belong to the same flock, cared for by the same shepherd.

Application

As followers of Christ, we are called to reflect the care of the Good Shepherd in our relationships. We look out for one another, especially when someone is struggling. Think

about someone who might feel alone or vulnerable right now. How might you embody the shepherding care of Christ for them today?

Prayer

Good Shepherd, guide me so that I may care for others with your compassion and faithfulness. Amen.

Friday, March 20

Scripture: Acts 2:42–47

The believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to their prayers. A sense of awe came over everyone. God performed many wonders and signs through the apostles. All the believers were united and shared everything. They would sell pieces of property and possessions and distribute the proceeds to everyone who needed them. Every day, they met together in the temple and ate in their homes. They shared food with gladness and simplicity. They praised God and demonstrated God's goodness to everyone. The Lord added daily to the community those who were being saved.

Observation

The book of Acts describes the early Christian community that formed after Jesus' resurrection and ascension. These believers shared meals, prayed together, and cared for one another's needs. This communal life reflects the spirit of the new family Jesus formed at the cross. The early church took seriously the responsibility to care for one another materially and spiritually. Such practices were countercultural in the Roman world, where social hierarchies often determined how people related to one another. In the church, believers shared life as equals in Christ.

Application

Community does not happen automatically, it requires intention. Shared meals, prayer, and generosity strengthen the bonds between people. Consider how you might deepen your participation in Christian community. Is there a faith group, ministry, or service opportunity where you can connect more fully with others?

Prayer

Lord, help me participate fully in the life of your church. Teach me to share generously and love faithfully. Amen.

Saturday, March 21

Scripture: Ruth 1:16–17

But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to abandon you, to turn back from following after you.

Wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord do this to me and more so if even death separates me from you.”

Observation

The story of Ruth takes place during the time of the judges, a period of instability in Israel’s history. Naomi, an Israelite woman, has lost her husband and sons while living in Moab. Widowed and grieving, she prepares to return home to Bethlehem with little hope for the future. In the ancient world, widows were among the most vulnerable members of society. Without husbands or sons, they often had no means of support. Naomi urges her daughters-in-law to remain in Moab where they might rebuild their lives. Orpah returns home, but Ruth makes a remarkable commitment to Naomi.

Ruth’s declaration is more than a statement of loyalty; it is a covenant of belonging. She chooses to bind her life to Naomi’s life, adopting Naomi’s people and Naomi’s God. In doing so, Ruth crosses cultural and ethnic boundaries. A Moabite woman becomes part of the story of Israel. This moment echoes the kind of community Jesus forms at the cross in John’s Gospel. Just as Jesus entrusts Mary and the beloved disciple to one another, Ruth chooses relationship and responsibility over self-protection. The people of God become family not only by birth but by covenant love.

Application

Christian community often begins with simple but powerful commitments: walking with someone through hardship, staying present in difficult seasons, and choosing relationship when it would be easier to walk away. In a world that often encourages independence and self-sufficiency, Scripture reminds us that we are meant to belong to one another. Consider someone in your life who may need companionship or support right now. What would it look like to stand beside them the way Ruth stood beside Naomi? Your faithful presence can be one of the greatest gifts you offer.

Prayer

Faithful God, thank you for the gift of community. Help me to be a loyal friend and a compassionate companion to those who need support. Teach me to walk with others in love. Amen.