

SUNDAY MESSAGE

ON THE OTHER HAND, WE PRAY!

Pastor Keith Nix

THE LIFT CHURCH

theliftchurch.tv



THE TEXT

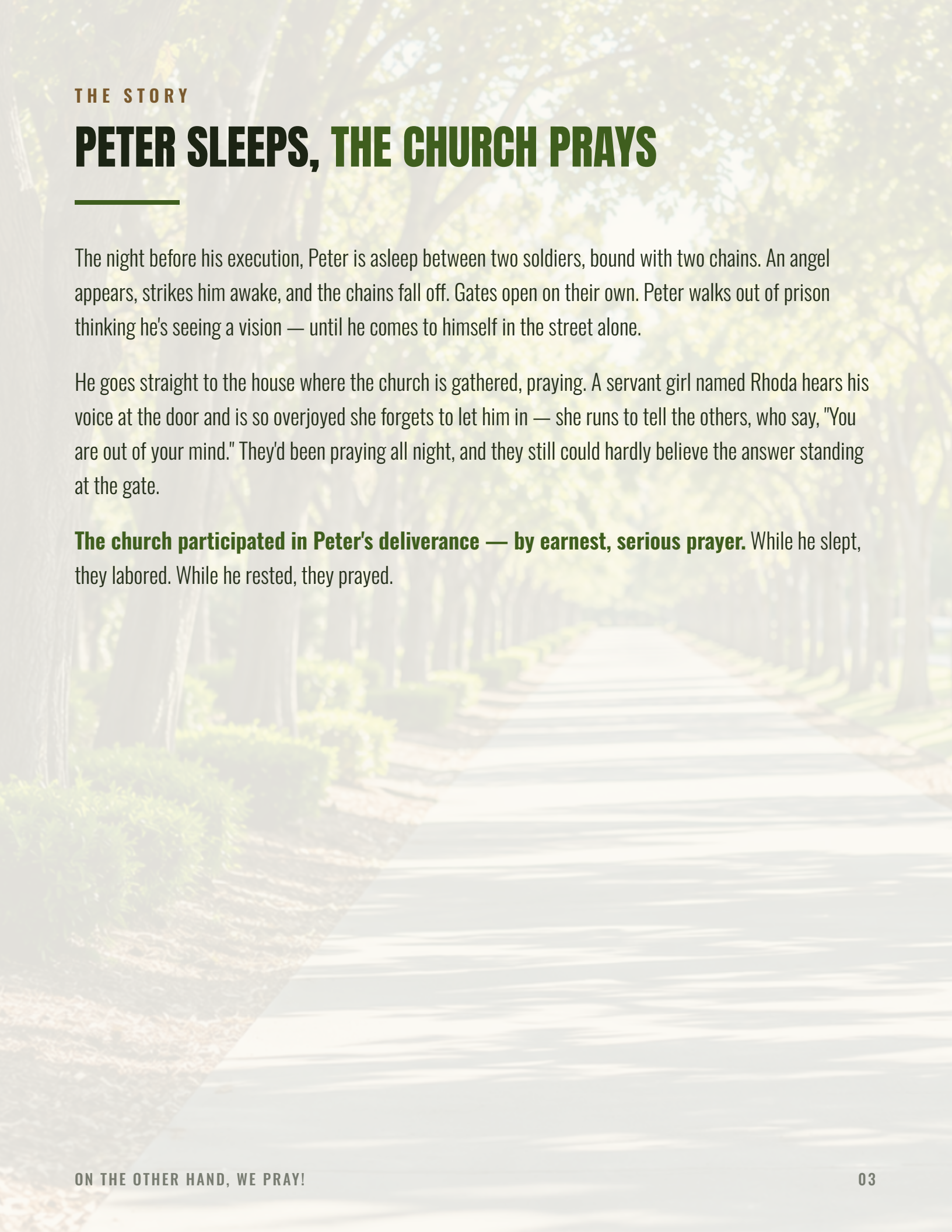
ACTS 12:5

"So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church."

ACTS 12:5

A fuller rendering: "On the one hand, Peter was continually guarded in the prison, but on the other hand, prayer was continually and earnestly being directed by the church of God concerning him."

James had already been executed. Peter was arrested, guarded by four squads of soldiers, and scheduled for public execution after Passover. On the one hand, real trouble. But on the other hand — there is still power in prayer.

The background of the page is a soft-focus photograph of a tree-lined path. The path is paved and leads from the foreground towards a body of water in the distance. Tall trees with green foliage line both sides of the path, creating a canopy effect. The water is calm, reflecting the light. The overall tone is peaceful and serene.

THE STORY

PETER SLEEPS, THE CHURCH PRAYS

The night before his execution, Peter is asleep between two soldiers, bound with two chains. An angel appears, strikes him awake, and the chains fall off. Gates open on their own. Peter walks out of prison thinking he's seeing a vision — until he comes to himself in the street alone.

He goes straight to the house where the church is gathered, praying. A servant girl named Rhoda hears his voice at the door and is so overjoyed she forgets to let him in — she runs to tell the others, who say, "You are out of your mind." They'd been praying all night, and they still could hardly believe the answer standing at the gate.

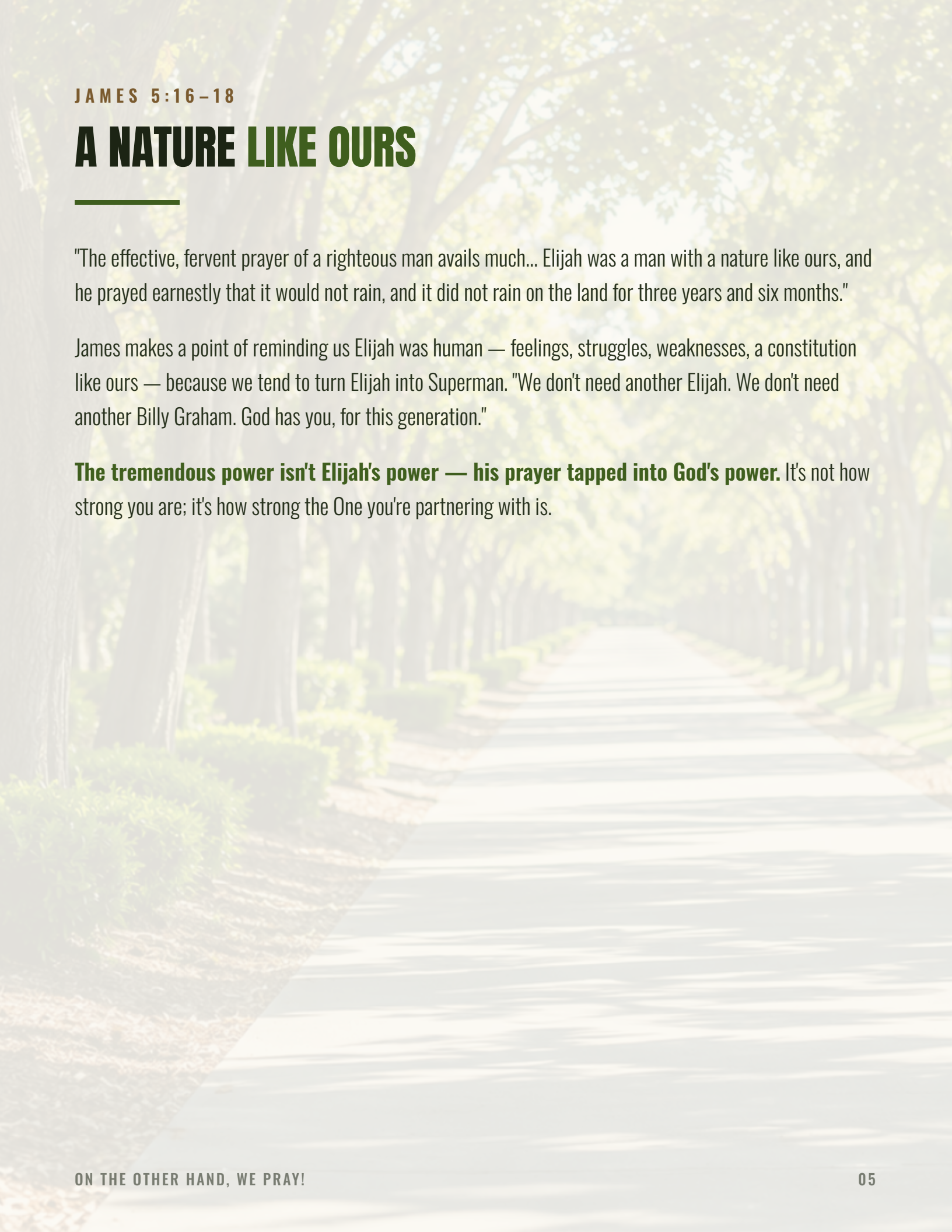
The church participated in Peter's deliverance — by earnest, serious prayer. While he slept, they labored. While he rested, they prayed.



“

THE GREAT POWER OF PRAYER ISN'T BASED ON OUR PROWESS IN PRAYER, BUT ON POSITIONING OURSELVES TO PRAY.

PASTOR KEITH NIX



JAMES 5:16–18

A NATURE LIKE OURS

"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much... Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months."

James makes a point of reminding us Elijah was human — feelings, struggles, weaknesses, a constitution like ours — because we tend to turn Elijah into Superman. "We don't need another Elijah. We don't need another Billy Graham. God has you, for this generation."

The tremendous power isn't Elijah's power — his prayer tapped into God's power. It's not how strong you are; it's how strong the One you're partnering with is.

KEYS TO EFFECTIVE PRAYER

1. SHOW UP

Matthew 6:6 — when you pray, go into your room and shut the door. God isn't waiting to hear how well you do; He rewards you simply for showing up.

2. PRAY THE WILL OF GOD

John 15:7 — if you abide in His word and His word abides in you, ask whatever you will. Faith begins where the will of God is known.

3. PRAY IN FAITH

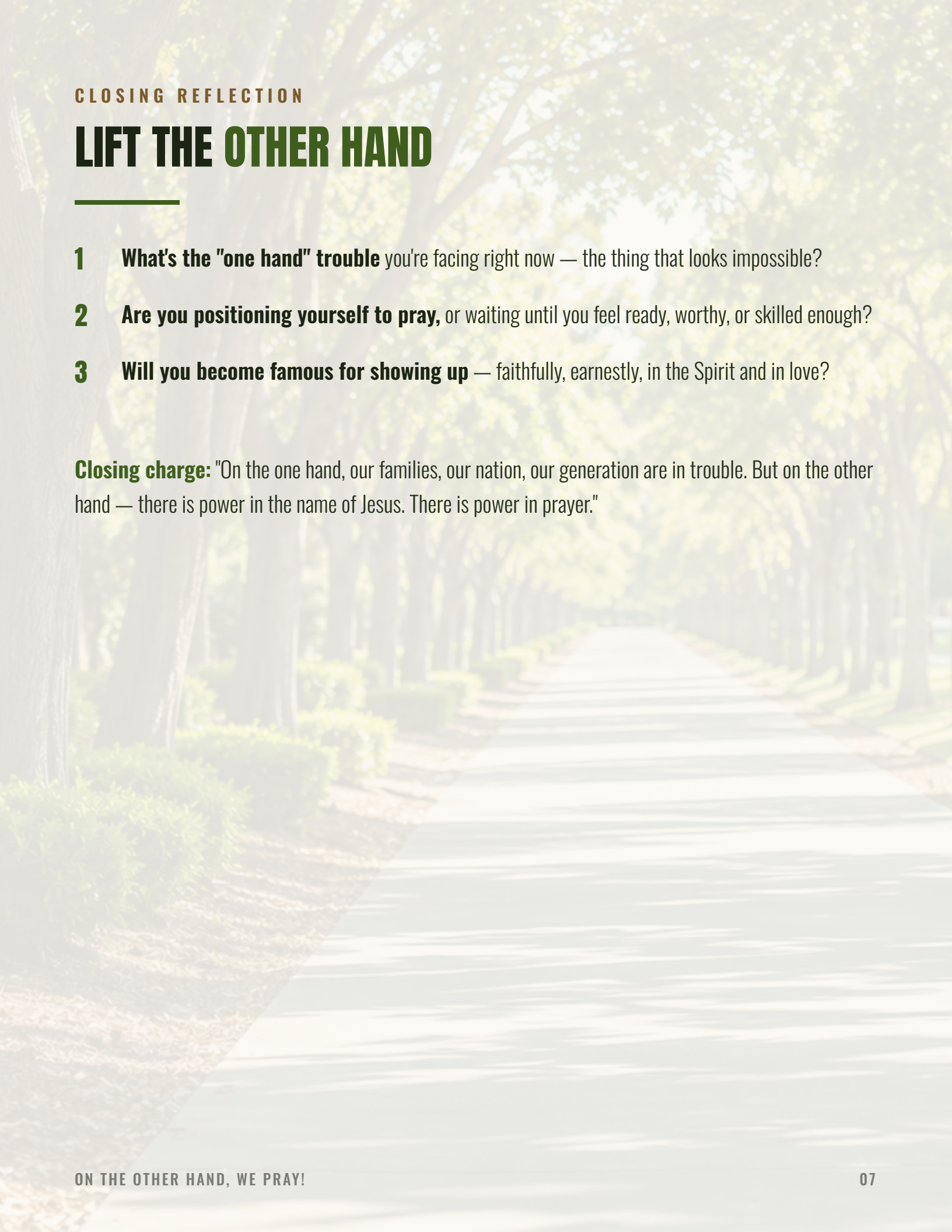
Faith comes from staying yoked to His word — letting His truth abide in you until your will lines up with His.

4. PRAY EARNESTLY

Serious, not flippant. The church that prayed for Peter was in earnest — uncomical and deeply serious about the praying.

5. PRAY IN THE SPIRIT & IN LOVE

Whether in tongues or your own language, moved by the Spirit — and moved with compassion, the way Jesus was moved for people.



CLOSING REFLECTION

LIFT THE OTHER HAND

- 1** What's the "one hand" trouble you're facing right now — the thing that looks impossible?
- 2** Are you positioning yourself to pray, or waiting until you feel ready, worthy, or skilled enough?
- 3** Will you become famous for showing up — faithfully, earnestly, in the Spirit and in love?

Closing charge: "On the one hand, our families, our nation, our generation are in trouble. But on the other hand — there is power in the name of Jesus. There is power in prayer."