

Los Altos Church of Christ

*"...being of the same mind, maintaining the same love,
united in spirit, intent on one purpose." Philippians 2:2*

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This Sunday...He Refused To Bow

Last week we heard how Mordecai and Esther spent their lives fitting in. Nobody knew they were Jews. Esther is now a queen. Mordecai has become a valued member of the king's court. Life was good. Then one day Haman, the highest official in the king's court, passed by. Everyone bowed except one...Mordecai. Why did he jeopardize everything?

Sadie Smith passed away just before Christmas. It's been a few years since Sadie was able to worship with us but when she was there her presence was felt. Her loving smile and joy were always evident. We will all miss this loving Christian woman. Prayers for Kita, Katrice and family members.



Bring Our Gifts To Jesus...This year we collected \$735 for the Southeastern Children's Home and Mountain States Christian Home! Under the circumstances that was pretty amazing!

PRAYERS *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7*

- Praise that Sophie has completed her isolation period. Brooke is doing well and is almost out of her period of isolation. And praise that Joannie and no other Johnsons were infected. Liz and Charlie are over their covid infection. Bo has it but is exhibiting no symptoms.
- Testing positive: Joe and Amber; Joe's sister and son; Anastasia Rosenthal; Jeff's niece, Julia, and her husband.

Continue to pray for John and Jennifer... Roger Townsend...Tim's heart condition...Berry... Jeff's mother... Jene's hand...Christine's mother...Bill Spivey ... Allen Sawyers...The Britton Family ... Barbara... Gwen and her son Caleb... Emmy Creswick... Jene's friend, Jim Thorpe... Lu...City of Children... Healing Hands International... Japhet's work in Zimbabwe...and New Hope Uganda.

Thought for the week...

Faith is not the belief that God will do what you want. Faith is the belief that God will do what is right.

- Max Lucado

7 Timely Prayers to Prepare for the New Year

Clarence L. Haynes Jr.

If you are like many people 2020 probably did not go as expected. Many people came into 2020 proclaiming it to be the year of vision. It has been a year of vision, I'm just not sure people have really liked what they have seen. One of the beautiful things about a new year is that it offers new hope. People often think of it as a clean slate or a fresh start. Isn't that what new year's resolutions are about anyway? However, like any new year or any new day for that matter, no one knows (except God of course) what it will hold. 2021 will be no different.

The good news is that you know the Lord, or better yet he knows you. Regardless how the rest of this year goes as we look ahead, I would like to offer seven prayers to consider for the new year.

1. A New Year's Prayer for Peace

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27).

God has offered us his peace. The reality of peace is that it is not the absence of chaos but the presence of calm within the chaos. As you face the new year, remember God has promised you his peace. When you pray as Philippians 4 instructs you to do, then God promises his peace will guard your heart and mind.

Prayer: Lord, in spite of what I see and everything happening, I pray for your complete peace. In my circumstances don't let me be anxious or troubled. Help me to pray about everything, leaving it all in your hands. As I do let your peace rest in my heart as I trust in you. In your name I pray, Amen.

2. A New Year's Prayer for Hope

"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful" (Hebrews 10:23).

To be without hope is a dangerous place to be because at that point life feels like it's not worth living. You may have felt like this, but you don't have to remain in that place. You can have hope in the one who saved you and has promised to bless you and keep you.

Prayer: Lord, in this new year help me to remember your promises and who you are. It is because of you that I can have hope because you are faithful. Let your faithfulness be the thing I remember and rely on. Let that be the source of my hope and joy. In your name I pray, Amen.

3. A Prayer for New Beginnings

Let's face it, we all have probably done some things that we wish we could do over. As we face a new year and review, let it be a time of learning. Look at the mistakes. Repent if you must and pray for grace to move forward without repeating the errors of yesterday.

Prayer: Lord it is so hard to pick up the pieces and keep moving forward. Help me to see that your plan is still in effect. Give me faith to know that regardless of what this past year has looked like I can start over. Help me not to run with my head looking backwards. Help me to run forward into the plan and purpose you have set before me. In your name I pray, Amen.

4. A Prayer to Focus on Christ in the New Year

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Let's face it, every day we are faced with a myriad of distractions. All of them are designed to get you to take your eyes off Jesus and what matters most. Let this new year be the year you lock in on what matters to God and his heart. After all that is what matters most.

Prayer: *Lord, help me to fix my eyes on you. There are so many distracting voices that clamor for my attention. Help me to shut those out to focus on your voice. Help me to make room for you and to make time with you a top priority in my life. In your name I pray, Amen.*

5. A Prayer for Reconciliation

"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone" (Romans 12:18).

This past year has felt like it has been more divisive than ever. The divisions have spilled over from the world into the church. We need to heal those divides because the message of the Gospel is at stake. If this year was a year of division, we need to make the next a year of reconciliation.

Prayer: *Lord, this has been a year with many questions and very deep emotional feelings coming to the surface. Help me and the body of Christ to push past every divisive thing and move to a place of reconciliation. Let the fruit of the Spirit be evident in my life as I seek to be a healer of broken and angry hearts. In your name I pray, Amen.*

6. A Prayer of Blessing

"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace" (Numbers 6:24-26).

It is good to know that there is a God in heaven who delights and enjoys blessing his people. The blessings are not just for physical things but go way beyond that. More than the blessings we should be pursuing the One who blesses us. Let this be the year you run after God, not for anything he can give you, but because you want him more than anything else.

Prayer: *Lord, in the midst of chaos, sometimes it's hard to see your blessing. Help me to seek your face in this new year. Help me to desire you more than anything you could ever do for me. Let Jesus be the object of my affection and the prize of my heart. In your name I pray, Amen.*

7. A Prayer of Hope after a Hard Year

"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. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:11-13).

This year has been hard and historic in so many ways, and yet we still have to press on. As you do that remember that in spite of everything God's plan for your life is still in effect. If you will walk in obedience before him, he will accomplish everything that he desires to accomplish in your life. It doesn't matter what is happening around you.

Prayer: *Lord, after this hard year help me not to forget your plan for my life. There is hope in your plan, but Father, let it come with me calling upon your name and seeking after you with all my heart. Help me not to look around but look up and remember that my hope is not in what's around me, but my hope is in you. In your name I pray, Amen.*

As you consider these prayers for the new year let them be an encouragement to do one thing: return to your first love. Let this be a year when Jesus and his desire for your life becomes the most important thing. Let his heart be the one that you key in on and let his love radiate and shine through your life. Here's to following God all the way in 2021.