

6/01/2026

It Begins in Prayer

Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation... - Psalm 25:4-5

Many of the psalms or prayers of the Bible are attributed to David, the once and great king of Israel. David is often seen as the model of a heart that longs to walk closely with God. His words, as they echo through the ages, are a prayer - simple, honest, and deeply dependent on God's divine guidance. David's prayers don't ask for quick fixes or easy paths. Instead, he seeks God's way, God's truth, and God's guidance. David understands that walking with God isn't about following our own instincts – it's about staying in constant connection with the One who knows the way.

David's prayer in this psalm is not only a personal cry for guidance—it reflects a posture of humility and dependence that we are all invited to share.

In community, we learn together what it means to follow God's way. We pray for one another, encourage each other in truth, and wait together in hope. The church becomes a gathering of seekers, each one helping the other keep their eyes on Christ, and the mission to share Christ's love through the gospel.

Prayer is powerful when it is shared in community. It strengthens the bonds of faith between us and invites God's presence into our relationships, our decisions, and our shared calling. When we pray together, God opens our hearts to the divine instruction and reminds us that we are not alone on the journey of faith or life. We are directed toward the communal truth of the nature of God: we were never meant to walk this life in isolation.

As we move into this season of transition, and the summer months, with often less busy schedules, I wonder if we might reflect a little more on the people God is calling us to walk alongside in the faith. How might we invite them to be a part of our journey that we might seek God with them?

Each of the next few weeks, as our family prepares to journey with you into this next season, I am committed to be in prayer. I want to know where and how God may be leading us together. I would like to invite you to join me in this time of prayer, that we might be open like David, to allow the Lord to teach us the path, the truth, and lead us in knowing God's way.

Each week, there will be some specific themes in prayer. These themes are not to direct where God may be leading us, but to be open to new possibilities, new opportunities to seek God together. I am thankful for this opportunity to come and serve among you.

Grace & Peace,
Sam

6/08/2026

Can Anything Be 'New'?

What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun. - Ecclesiastes 1:9

Solomon, in all his wisdom, was attempting to teach something he understood; something that some have yet to realize - there is nothing new. We do like to think that we can find something new, and there are plenty of things that we might "discover" or that might be "new to us;" however, what has been, will be, and that's just the way of things, especially things that are part of human nature. Perhaps the better way for us to look at some things that we haven't experienced is to see them with the wide-eyed wonderment of a child.

It is truly one of my favorite things as a father to see my children's reaction and joy when they experience something new for the first time. When they see something they have never seen before, the curiosity behind their eyes is refreshing. It makes me long for the same; it makes me want to experience something new that I haven't seen before; it makes me want to have a new sense of joy because I have been blessed to experience something more of the grandeur of this world. I think we all crave positive new experiences and blessings.

Most of the time however, I find I am more like Solomon and think: "that's been done before," or more aptly "here we go again," and sometimes "that's the same as ____ (fill in the blank depending on the situation)." Perhaps I, and all of us at times, need to let go of those thoughts for a little while to allow God to show us something more, something deeper, something that He has stored away just for us, a blessing that we might know Him more or praise Him more through it.

I pray that as we begin this "same ole journey" into a new appointment season (new pastor and new church), we begin to pray that God would open our hearts and our eyes. I hope that we might allow God to give us the wonder of a child to help us see the Glory of His Goodness with a new perspective. God has not changed, because God never changes, but God desires for us to reclaim the image of divine love. In such love there is wonder, amazement, and vision to see and be amazed at what God is already doing.

This week, I hope you will join me in prayer for new vision.

God, grant us hearts to be open, eyes to see your love in us. Help us to make space for something new to begin in us, in our church, and in our community for Your glory. Amen.

Grace & Peace,
Sam

6/15/2026

Where is God Moving?

For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what one already sees? – Romans 8:24

I remember waiting in traffic one morning during school drop-off when the sky suddenly opened up and poured rain. It was one of those spring showers that seem to come out of nowhere. Cars crawled along as the rain beat against the windshield, and honestly, I just wanted to get through the morning and make it to the church.

But after leaving the school, traffic was backed up on the road I normally took. Frustrated, I decided to turn down a different road instead. A few moments later, the rain stopped, the clouds began to break apart, and as I came over a hill, there it was — a full rainbow stretching across the sky. Bright. Clear. Beautiful enough to make me slow down and just stare for a moment.

And the thought hit me later: I never would have seen it if I had stayed on the same road I always traveled.

Sometimes God's surprises are like that.

There is something beautiful about a surprise. A child tearing open wrapping paper to receive a beloved gift. An unexpected phone call from a friend. A kindness we never saw coming. Part of what makes a surprise meaningful is that we did not know exactly when or how it would arrive. If we already knew every detail ahead of time, the wonder would fade.

Many approach life with God wanting certainty instead of surprise. We want clear answers, mapped-out plans, and visible outcomes before we are willing to move forward. But hope, Paul says, does not work that way. Hope invites us to trust before we can fully see. Paul follows with: "but if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience."

We often move through life wanting predictable routes and familiar routines. We pray for God to work, but we expect God to show up only in the places we have already planned to look. Hope calls us to trust that God may be moving in ways we did not expect, and in places we would not normally go.

Prayer is more than asking God to act. It is also about opening our eyes to where God is already moving.

Sometimes the blessing is waiting just beyond the detour. Sometimes the beauty appears only when we are willing to leave the familiar road behind. And sometimes what first feels like an inconvenience becomes the very thing that allows us to see grace we otherwise would have missed.

As you pray this week, ask God to help you see where an unexpected surprise of God's presence might be found.

Lord, open my eyes today to the places where your grace is already at work. Help me not to miss the beauty you place before me simply because I am too focused on where I expected to go. Give me courage to follow where you lead, even in the unexpected detours, trusting that you are always drawing me toward your goodness. Amen.

Grace & Peace,

Sam

6/22/2026

God is Calling You Forward

² *The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.* ³ *The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and ate our fill of bread, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."* – Exodus 16:2-3

Several years ago, I led a small group through the book of Exodus. It's a story that many in this group, who had grown up in the Church, thought they knew. For the most part, we do know this story. The baby Moses was placed in a reed basket, saved and raised by the daughter of Pharaoh, and lived in Pharaoh's house. A grown Moses saw the mistreatment of the Israelites, killed an Egyptian and subsequently fled for fear of his own life. While away, he married, became a herder, and had an encounter with God at the burning bush. From there, Moses went back to Egypt, caused some plagues with God's help, and ultimately was able to free the Israelites from their oppressors.

I know that is a rough and ready synopsis of the beginning 15 chapters, but hopefully you get the point.

To me, the real story happens as the Israelites begin their journey, because from the moment of their freedom they complain against Moses. And we see that phrase again and again, "the Israelites complained against Moses." They complain about water, about food, about shelter, about all of the things that they remember from their lives in Egypt. Even though God saved them from their lowly estates, brought them into freedom, and was ushering them towards a Promised Land of milk and honey, they still complained about the journey.

When you are on a journey with God, it is hard to see past the current problems. It's hard to know what the next turn will bring, and we are never sure that we are going to make it. When we are in a time of trial or trouble, it's a lot easier to believe that the best days are behind us. It's easy to think that it would be better if we could get back to "when..." However, the God of our salvation calls us ever forward. God calls us to let go of the past, and to believe that the best is still to come.

I know that is a hard concept to believe sometimes, but it is a promise that I believe – the best is still to come.

Many times in ministry (and in life), it has taken me longer than I care to admit that I couldn't move forward because I was still holding on to some idea of the past. Like the Israelites, who when hungry, forgot about the bad part of slavery and could only focus on the food they had in Egypt. When our best version seems a distant memory, it is hard for us to see the blessings that God has in store for us in the future. Yet, the truth remains, the best is still to come.

This week, I hope you will join me in praying for us to recognize the things that God is asking us to let go, so that we can have open hands for the blessings that are ahead.

God of all blessings, we confess that we struggle to see past our current circumstances, we wish for things to be like they once were when we felt your presence, when we saw life, when we were vibrant; but, Lord, you did not take those things from us. Even in times of trial, you are blessing us with daily bread, with manna from heaven. Forgive our grumbling and help us to trust in your promises that the best is still to come. Amen.

With Joy,
Pastor Sam