

# Daily Devotional

*Day 1 - August 17*

**READ JOSHUA 3.1-5**

After wandering in the wilderness for 40 years, the children of Israel are finally ready to move into the Promised Land. However, they were not supposed to move until they saw the Ark move first. Once the Ark moved, they were to follow. The Ark is a symbol of Jesus Christ. When we see Jesus move, we need to quickly follow. But before we move out with Jesus, we must consecrate ourselves. Come to a place of total surrender, purity, and dedication. This was a defining moment for the people of Israel, just as it is for us. Let us prepare ourselves, ask and receive forgiveness from God, confess and ask forgiveness from anyone we have offended, and confess any sin that may be hindering us from entering the Promised Land. Pray for our church that our leaders, teachers, and all partners would be consecrated before the Lord.

*Day 2 - August 18*

**READ JOSHUA 3.6-17**

Many times when God is leading us to a new place, we want God to move first, and then we will move. What we call caution many times is, in reality, a lack of faith. God was going to part the waters of the Jordan River, but He did not do it until the priests put their feet into the water. There may be something in your personal journey that God is asking you to do, and you are waiting for God to do everything, while God is waiting for you to step into the water and start moving first.

*Day 3 - August 19*

**READ 1 SAMUEL 15; 16.14**

It is a wonderful thing to walk in the blessing of the Lord. When the Lord has anointed us as His children, and we are daily walking in the Spirit of God, life is good. But we should never become complacent because the anointing of God is fragile. Saul was anointed as God's king for the people of Israel. But consistent disobedience cost Saul the throne and, more importantly, the Bible says, "the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul." How tragic! A man had all the potential and resources to live the abundant life but lost God's anointing and blessing. What is even scarier for me is that he continued as king for a while longer, yet he continued in his own strength only. But it was a disaster. As individuals and as a church, we want God's blessing and anointing. We need to understand how fragile it is and consistently seek the Lord with all our hearts. As we walk in His blessing, we will see miracles. The other choice is to rely only on our own strength, and we know that brings disaster. Pray that God's blessing and anointing would never depart from us, that we would remain humble and true to Him.

*Day 4 - August 20*

**READ EXODUS 23.20-30**

In this passage, God is telling the Israelites everything He is going to do for them if they remain faithful and obedient to Him. Let us focus on verses 29-30. As God promises to give them the land and remove all their enemies, He says that He will not drive them all out at once. He says the Israelites are not prepared to handle that much opportunity and blessing at one time. He says the land will become desolate, and wild animals will come in and destroy them. He promises to give them just what they need, when they need it, as they need it. God is so gracious. He does not want to give the Israelites more blessings than they can handle. Too much blessing can be unbearable and cause us to be unable to maintain it. "Little by little until you are able to take possession of the land." I believe God has always met us where we are. He has given us just what we needed when we needed it. Not too much, but always on time. Pray that God will always give us His blessing, little by little, but that we would always be willing to stretch and come out of our comfort zone at each level.

*Day 5 - August 21*

**READ EXODUS 23.20-30**

In Exodus 3, God is calling Moses to bring His people out of captivity at the burning bush. Chapter 4 is Moses telling God why he cannot fulfill that call. Excuses are so damaging in the kingdom of God. It must break God's heart to hear His children give reasons why they cannot do something. When we are connected to the One who has all the resources at His disposal, it must be heartbreaking for God to hear us whine about our limitations. God already knows our limitations. He is also aware that He is going to provide for us along the way so He can receive the glory. As a matter of fact, God already has a plan to make up for Moses' limitations. In verse 14, God says Aaron is already on the way. All our needs are already in motion and moving toward us, Moses. We may not see them, but God does. How many times has God called us to do something, and we have given a laundry list of reasons why we cannot do it? And God responds by saying, Aaron is already on the way. Pray also that we will have the faith that Aaron is on the way.

*Day 6 - August 22*

**READ JOSHUA 6.1-21**

When the children of Israel crossed over into the Promised Land, you would think life would get pretty restful and easy. But as soon as they get across the Jordan and have a celebration, they are back to war. Jericho is standing right in front of them. God says the land is yours, but you have to take it. God says I am going to do My part, but you have to do your part. I have committed to give it to you, but you have to take it. Many times we sit back and wait for God to do everything for us, and many times people wait so long they miss the opportunity. It will always be true that there are some things only God can do but it is also true there are some things that God wants us to do. In almost all endeavors there is God's part and our part. God is going to do it, but He has chosen to do it through us. Pray that we would have the wisdom to know the difference between God's part and our part.

*Day 7 - August 23*

**READ JOSHUA 7**

Our limitations cannot stop us from completing God's will for our church and ministries. The only thing that can stop us is sin in the camp. Joshua and the army was a little presumptuous in sending 3,000 men to handle the battle at Ai. It seems a little like they had become arrogant already in their ability to win wars. And perhaps they could have won that battle with limited military muscle, but something was wrong with their relationship with God. It would not have mattered if they sent 3,000 or 300,000 men, they were going to fail. God tells Joshua in v.11, that Israel has sinned, they have violated my covenant. Once again God tells the people to consecrate themselves. That begins by dealing with the sin in the camp. A man named Achan had sinned and specially violated God's commands. What is interesting is that only Achan sinned, yet God said Israel sinned. We struggle to understand the corporate nature of sin in the local church today. Each of us is responsible to the other. The days ahead will be a very delicate time in the history of our church. Pray that our people will not persist in any unconfessed sin. Pray that God will give us wisdom if there is some sin that sidetracks us so we can deal with it.



*Day 8 - August 24***READ JOSHUA 5.10-15**

After Joshua led the people across the Jordan River into the Promise Land there was a great time of celebration. After 400 years in Egyptian slavery and 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, they were finally free. But as Joshua and his people would realize, getting free and maintaining freedom are two different things. They immediately go into battle against Jericho and Ai. It is a constant reminder that becoming free and maintaining freedom are very different. We can be forgiven, give forgiveness, experience healing and feel as cleansed as we ever have. Hurts can accumulate again and if we do not forgive the next hurt and fall back into old patterns, then the freedom we experienced is not going to be lived out practically in our life. We may have freedom but we are not walking in freedom or maintaining freedom. As we grow, mature, and heal we must be aware of our tendencies to slide back. Even as we press forward in celebration of our next steps we must realize there will be battles and difficult days ahead. It does not mean we are on a wrong path. It means that even in God's will we face battles. Pray for our leadership, partner, and church that we will continue to stay on the healthy path. Pray that we will understand who we are in Christ and live out the freedom Jesus Christ has paid for. Pray that we will see future battles for what they really are and not grow faint.

*Day 9 - August 25***READ EXODUS 13.17-14.9**

Fear is a paralyzing emotion. It causes us to miss so many opportunities, victories, and blessings. The children of Israel are at the Jordan River for the first time ready to cross over into the Promised Land. Four hundred years of slavery in Egypt and they are now prepared to receive their own land. The spies are sent in to scout out the land and bring back the report. The land is flowing with milk and honey. The fruit and vegetation that had dreamed about is a reality. Everything God has said about the land is true. But they bypassed all that was good and fixed their eyes on the obstacles. They began to focus on the people of the land and fear gripped them. In 14.1, they wept aloud because their dream had died. Joshua focused on what could be. He saw the goodness and possibilities of the land, not the obstacles. And he gets to the core issue, "If the Lord is pleased with us, He will lead us into that land; a land flowing with milk honey, and will give it to us...only do not be afraid." We know they were afraid and lost their dream. Pray that we would never be afraid to conquer new territory, take risks, and move into uncertainty. "If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land."

*Day 10 - August 26***READ GENESIS 24.1-27**

We learn a great principle in this story that is taught to us by Rebekah. Abraham is looking for a wife for his son Isaac. He sends his servant to their home land and has a plan to pick the right girl. The servant is only going to ask for a drink, but the girl who says, 'I will also give water to your camels' will be the one. Basically, it is the one who goes the second mile, gives more than expected, and has great character. The "Rebekah Principle" says maximum effort for minimum expectation. At the end of a day's journey, a camel would drink 20-30 gallons of water to get full again. With ten camels, that is between 200-300 gallons of water. The maximum size jar she could probably carry would be a five gallon jar. At 200 gallons with a five gallon jar, she is making 40 trips to the well. Assuming it took a couple of minutes for each trip, this task took her over 2 hours. Since this time was the busy time of day at the well, it could have taken her between 3 and 4 hours. She did more than was expected of her, expecting nothing in return. As we think about our own relationship and commitment to Jesus Christ, we should think about Rebekah. Am I asking what is the minimum I can do and get by? Or do I go the second mile? The truth is you cannot go the second mile until you've gone the first. To reach people with the Gospel, City Hope Church needs people to go the first and second mile in our commitment, giving, leadership, and prayers. Pray that God will raise up many second milers. Pray also that all of us would be willing to at least go the first mile.

*Day 11 - August 27***READ 1 SAMUEL 8**

God had led Israel through the years with Moses, Joshua, and then the Judges. Israel never had a human king because they had something better than all the other nations, they had Almighty God as their king. The people make an excuse about Samuel being old and his sons being disobedient. The real reason, we find out in v.20, is they want to be like all the other nations. The pagan nations have a human king to lead them and fight for them so Israel says 'that is what we want.' The problem is God has called His people to be different than all the other nations. He is trying to get all the other nations to be like Israel, and now Israel is wanting to be like other nations. As Christians, we struggle so much with wanting to be like the world. We see what worldly ideas, worldview, and behavior can get us and we want those things. We don't want to be different. We don't want to stick out. So we say we want things, whether God wants us to have them or not. And just like Israel, sometimes God gives us what we ask for, ignoring God's Word and Will. We may say, "I know I should not be with that person, but I want them. I know I shouldn't desire more materialistic things, but I want it." God gives it to us and just like the King of Israel, it will end up hurting us. Let us be people who desire what God wants for us, more than anything else. No matter how we feel or what our desires crave, we will not violate the word and will of God. Pray that we will embrace who God has made us to be.

*Day 12 - August 28***READ JUDGES 6**

We all know about the captivity of Israel by Egypt and how God used Moses to set His people free. But later, the children of Israel became disobedient and God allowed the Midianites to oppress them and hold them captive for seven years. For seven years the Midianites oppressed and destroyed Israel's crops, animals, livelihood, and future. Finally after seven years, they cry out to God for help. God is very willing to listen to their cry and answer them. He wants us to know why things are happening. In their cry for help, God calls a man named Gideon. An angel of the Lord comes to Gideon while he is in hiding in a winepress threshing wheat. In a winepress, people make wine, but Gideon is making bread for his family while he hides from the enemy because he is afraid. Gideon struggled with fear and a very low self-image. In v.15 he says, "My clan is the weakest, my family is the weakest in our clan, and I am the least in my family." But God says, "I will be with you." And when God is with you, it changes everything. God calls Gideon a "mighty warrior" in v.12, but there is nothing in Gideon's current life that would reflect that to be true. Through a series of events in chapters six and seven, Gideon begins to have a transformation. He is finally ready to go to war with 32,000 men and God tells him he has too many. For a man who struggles with fear, taking less men to battle is not very comforting. God whittles his army down to 300 men. Now Gideon is confronted with all his issues, all his struggles, his demon of fear and is forced to trust God alone. In 7:17, Gideon shouts the battle cry, "For the Lord and for Gideon." He had become the mighty warrior God said he was. Many of us are like Gideon. We only see what is. We do not see what could be. But God does. He looks at us and calls us "mighty warriors." Many do not believe God. Perhaps you struggle with fear or a low self-image like Gideon. Perhaps you struggle with something totally different. But God is probably going to isolate that issue and engineer circumstances to bring you face to face with that issue. You can walk away as a mighty warrior, victorious because God is with you. Pray that our church would walk in victory not fear. Pray that we never make decisions out of fear or out of our own resources, but out of the abundant resources of God. No Fear!



*Day 13 - August 29***READ 1 SAMUEL 13**

This is perhaps the most famous story in all of the Old Testament. David kills Goliath. What does it take to be a giant killer? God's army had cowered in fear for 40 days. After all of these days they had no intention of fighting Goliath. We learn that giants get even bigger the longer you ignore them. They keep growing and intimidating for so long that we have no hope of ever defeating them. David showed up on the first day and heard Goliath blaspheming God and the armies of God. He dealt with Goliath on that day. Deal with your giants as soon as you recognize them. Unresolved conflict, people, ministries, confrontation, unforgiveness, our marriage and many other things can become giants in our lives. The sooner you deal with them, the better. David even had opposition from people on his side. His older brother Eliab was telling him to go back to his sheep and stay out of the army's business. If you have ever had an older brother, you know the emotional hold they can have on you. David says in v.29, "Now what have I done?" There is an assumption that his older brother had been hard on him before. Perhaps he was jealous because he was overlooked as king. That did not sit well with older brother Eliab. But David pressed on. Then David faced King Saul who told him there was no way he could defeat Goliath. The King should have been the one to fight the giant, but he would not. And now he is criticizing someone who will. It is always difficult when people who won't do something, tell others who will do it, how to do it, or that they can't do it. David will replace Saul on this day in battle but it is the foreshadowing that David will replace Saul as King. If the leader does not do what a leader is supposed to do, he will not be the leader for very long. Saul would not fight. David would. In a short time Saul will not be king, David will. Is there a giant in your life that you need to face? Have you put it off and now it seems even bigger? Deal with it early and it will no longer be a giant in your life? Pray that we will conquer these giants with God as our strength.

*Day 14 - August 30***READ 1 SAMUEL 17.34-37**

There is another point that is very crucial in David's victory over Goliath. David did not start his journey of being a giant killer with Goliath. He started it as a shepherd boy on the hillsides of Bethlehem. He was always faithful in the everyday small things of life. One day a lion tried to come and eat his sheep, but David fought it off and killed that lion. Another day, a bear came to steal his sheep and eat it, but David fought off that bear and killed the bear. He always knew that God was the source of his protection. So when David got to Goliath, he knew that the God who protected him from the lion and the bear would give him victory over this uncircumcised Philistine. David would not even say his name. Many times we want to go straight to the Goliaths and take on the big stuff in front of the big audiences with lots of recognition. We don't want to simply be faithful in the mundane every day ministries or duties that receive very little notice or recognition. Yet the Bible says if we are faithful in the little things, we will receive more. Some are always looking on the horizon for what is next, while they miss what is happening today. They are not doing their current task with excellence, but they want something bigger. I believe if we are faithful in the daily small things, the bigger things will take care of themselves. Don't look for what God is going to do someday in your life, be faithful to what He is placed before you today. The big things will take care of themselves. Pray for your faithfulness right now where God has you planted. If He has more for you, that is His business. But today we are going to be faithful where we are. Pray that our church will always be faithful where we are at the moment. God is always taking us to new places and stretching us, but we must do today's task well. We must do the first mile well before we can go the second mile.

*Day 15 - August 31***READ 2 SAMUEL 11.1-5**

We go from a great victory for David to his biggest defeat. This story is so sad because so many people got hurt and some even died unnecessarily. The key to the whole story is in v.1. At the time of year when kings went off to war, David remained in Jerusalem. David was certainly the King, so he should have been off to war. Had he been off to war where he should have been, he would have never been on the balcony that day. He would have never seen Bathsheba if he would not have been on the balcony that day. Had he not seen Bathsheba, then this tragedy would not have happened. Many times we think our mistake is doing the wrong thing. The truth is many times we are simply in the wrong place. If we were not in the wrong place with the wrong people, then we would not have done what we did. For many Christians, it is not the wrong place physically, but the wrong place emotionally, spiritually, or with our attitude. If we go down certain paths of thinking we can get side tracked quite easily. We begin to think thoughts we should not think. We spiral downward with our thoughts. We begin to believe lies that are not true. These wrong mental places cause us to say things we should not say, believe things we should believe, and act in ways we should not act. Before we know it we are hanging around others who feel the same way and we are being negative, complaining, withdrawing, depressed, talking about others or getting angry. We would say that we should never have done that. But like David, who should never have been on that balcony, we should have never been in that mental state of mind. We should never have entertained those thoughts or lies. Pray for wisdom. If we remain where we are supposed to be spiritually and emotionally, we won't have to face unnecessary temptation. God's grace is seen even in this tragedy. God's ability to make something good out of our sin is miraculous. From David and Bathsheba would come a boy named Solomon. He would be the wisest person to ever live on this planet. He would build God's temple and write three books of the Old Testament. God is good, even when we are bad.

*Day 16 - September 1***READ ESTHER 4**

The question every person needs to ask when they are in a church is this: "Has God chosen these people for a special purpose?" If God has decided in His sovereignty to anoint a specific church for a specific mission and purpose, then the outcome is not in doubt. God has a plan to save the Jews from the decree of King Xerxes. God is not going to allow the Jews to be destroyed. The only question was who wants to be God's instrument to see this miracle carried out. Esther's cousin, Mordecai, told Esther that she had access to the King since she was one of his wives. He told her that God has placed her as queen for such a time as this. So she could help the Jews in this time of need. But if she did not help, God would save the Jews by someone else, and she would not receive any blessing. As a matter of fact, her family would perish. I hope every person at City Hope has this mentality. God's hand is on our church. He is going to raise a people who will embrace the process of healing and freedom for a broken and hurting world. A people who have restoration at the core of their identity. I believe we have a divine calling. The truth is, I believe God is going to do it. The good news is we have the opportunity to participate and receive the blessing for it. But, if we as individuals do not say yes, God will use someone else and bring other people in to accomplish His will and some may miss the blessing. Pray about your involvement. Do you believe God has a divine purpose for our church? If so, you and I have been placed here for such a time as this.



*Day 17 - September 2***READ 2 SAMUEL 13.1-22**

This passage helps us see why we exist and to understand our purpose. We are a place of restoration. A place of healing, hope and wholeness. A place where Jesus Christ is exalted as the bondage breaker. A place of hope that teaches and models for others that we can be free in Jesus Christ. As Tamar asks the question, “Where could I get rid of my disgrace?” We want to help her, and all the Tamars of this world, understand that they are children of the King. No matter what has happened to a person, he/she is still a child of the King. Tamar was abused by her brother Amnon, given horrible advice from her brother Absalom, and ignored by her father David. Many people have never had a human treat them with respect and unconditional love. Therefore it is difficult for them to believe God could unconditionally love them. Having another believer be the hands and feet of Jesus helps them believe in Jesus. We are all growing in our freedom and wholeness so that we can then be a catalyst for helping someone else. Pray for the ministry of restoration in our church. Pray that God would bring more leaders and give us more clarity about how best to embrace this ministry.

*Day 18 - September 3***READ 1 CHRONICLES 21**

David commits a great sin in chapter 21. He counts the number of fighting men he has in his army. We may wonder, what’s the big deal? The answer is found in the motive for counting the men. It was either to take pride in the number of men he could get on his team. Or it was to know how many so he would feel more secure and confident in upcoming battles. Both are probably true and both are grave sins against God. First, every man David had was a gift from God, not the expertise of David. We must always remember whatever we have is God’s. We don’t own or possess anything. Everything is on loan from Him. Secondly, the battles David fought were won and lost by God’s power and might, not Israel’s. God won a battle with Gideon with 300 men. God was very displeased with David. Many men died because of his disobedience. Another reminder that our sins always hurt other people. So, David repents and God tells him to build an altar on a specific piece of property. The property where David was supposed to build the altar was owned by another man. When the owner knew King David wanted the place, he told David to take it as a gift. But David replied, “I will not give that which costs me nothing.” What a great line. So many times we give to the Lord out of our abundance and not our sacrifice. David regained his fellowship with the Lord by sacrificing to the Lord something that did cost him. Pray that many in our church will sacrifice. Even in this sin God’s grace was seen. On the spot where David sacrificed for his sin would one day be the future Temple of the Lord.

*Day 19 - September 4***READ JOHN 6**

Jesus performs the miracle of feeding the 5000. From that point Jesus has many followers and they want to make him king. The real question is why did they want Jesus to be king of their life? Had they come to believe that he was the Messiah and they were sinners? Did they want Jesus to radically transform their lives into one of holiness and give their life to follow him at all cost? Or did they love the idea of someone giving them free food by saying a prayer? It will always be difficult to evaluate our love relationship with Jesus Christ. Do we want the blessings of Jesus and what he can do for us, or do we want Jesus? It is hard to answer that question authentically. God has blessed us so much. We struggle just as the Israelites struggled. Our blessings are so abundant it is now hard to separate loving Jesus from loving what Jesus can do for me. Jesus gave a hard teaching on surrender, not commitment. Commitment still keeps control in the hands of the person committing. They will or will not commit to this ministry or that. Surrender gives up full control of one's life to the control of another. Many are committed and they choose what they will and will not be committed to. Very few fully surrender. “I will do whatever you want me to do. I have no rights or say so in my life.” When the people heard this teaching, they all left. Their hearts were exposed as wanting the blessing but not wanting Jesus. Jesus looked at the 12 disciples and asked them if they were going to leave. Peter replies, “Where would we go? We are committed, Jesus, we have surrendered our lives to you. We have nowhere else to go.” Commitment still carries an element that we are setting our own agenda. Surrender is when God is setting our agenda. Pray for more people to go down the road of surrender. “I have been crucified with Christ, therefore I no longer live.” Gal. 2.20.

*Day 20 - September 5***READ JOHN 13.1-17**

Surrender comes in many forms. On Thursday night before Jesus would be crucified, he entered an upper room to celebrate the Passover with his disciples for the last time. In Jesus’ time when people entered a house, a servant would be at the door to wash the guest’s feet. People wore sandals and they walked on dusty roads. It was a very normal and common practice. Since this was a borrowed room and no one else was there, a servant was not present. Obviously everyone knew the custom of a servant washing your feet before you ate, but since there was not one, it was neglected. The foot washer, as you can imagine, is about as low on the totem pole as you get. There were no long lines of people hoping to get that job. It was the bottom. The other disciples were probably thinking, ‘I’m not the top guy, but one of these lower down guys should wash our feet.’ We know from Luke that they were arguing over who was the greatest. In the midst of the thoughts that must have been swirling in the room, Jesus grabs a water basin and washes the disciples’ feet. How could he do that? Because of v.3-4, Jesus knew who he was. His identity was secure so it allowed him to be secure in his service. Insecure people cannot serve like this. They are always wondering when it’s their turn. They are always wondering when they are going to be served, not when and how they can serve. Jesus was clear. His life was about servanthood. Then he tells us, “You will be blessed if you serve like this.” In a culture that screams, “It’s all about you. Do what you want.” It’s difficult to live a counter-culture mindset that says “It’s not about us.” Selfishness rules the kingdom of this world, but servanthood rules the kingdom of God. Pray that the very reputation of our people and church will be, that we are surrendered servants.

*Day 21 - September 6***READ ROMANS 11.33-36**

What situations cause you to doubt God? Do fears come because the future seems uncertain? Are hardships a challenge since they make the Lord appear unkind? Or perhaps your expectations and dreams have come crashing down, and it seems God is nowhere to be found. Since our heavenly Father is omniscient, sovereign, and loving, we have every reason to trust Him regardless of the circumstance. God is infinitely wise. We may have all the information that is humanly possible to gather, but God alone knows the future, the details of every situation, and the best possible plan for our life. The Lord has complete authority over all events. Even though God’s ways are beyond our comprehension, we can trust Him, knowing that His control is exercised perfectly according to His complete knowledge and great love. God’s love is unfailing. No matter what we are facing, nothing can separate us from His love, which is in Christ Jesus ([Romans 8.31-39](#)). Our church grows in love and wisdom as each individual grows. Take some time today to ponder God’s limitless love, wisdom, and sovereignty. When you are trusting in Him, you’ll be able to follow His path for your life, and your heart won’t be troubled ([John 14.1](#)).