

## Three Prayer Themes for 10 Days

Personal (Repentance), Intercessory Mourning, and Longing for the Bridegroom

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“Babylon refuses to mourn, but my people will mourn before I return.”

The 10 Days movement is a call to voluntarily enter into a season of mourning as the people of God, even as we call unbelieving individuals, cities, and nations to join us in humbling ourselves before the worthy “Lamb who was slain.”

### The Meaning of Mourning:

“Mourning” is not a particularly attractive word. It evokes funerals, black suits, and black dresses and in a Biblical context, wailing women, sackcloth, and ashes. We instinctively recoil from mourning, just as we long for and desire joy and gladness.

Some have said in the past about 10 Days, “the vision for unity sounds great, but can we get rid of the part about ‘mourning.’” Some people are so engulfed in difficult life circumstances and pain that a call to mourn seems to add sorrow on top of sorrow.

*How are we to understand the Lord’s invitation to us to enter Mourning?*

Let us first overcome our instinctive repulsion from the word and unpack its meaning more fully.

### Mourning is about what we do not have.

- We mourn because we’ve lost something or someone that we need or love.
- We mourn because we don’t have something that we need desperately or love greatly.
- We mourn because of a great loss, absence, or great suffering.
- We mourn because of pressure and loss inflicted on us by enemies.

While 10 Days is focused on “what we don’t have” and “what we’ve lost”, it is not mourning without hope. 10 Days is a time to recognize what we’re missing and what we’ve lost *in order that* we might receive it. It is mourning in hope, longing for the promises of God, aligning our hearts with God’s priorities so that we might see them come, on earth as it is in heaven.

It is an ironclad truth in the Kingdom that until we recognize what we’ve lost, what we lack, and what’s missing, we won’t ask for it, and therefore we won’t receive it (Matt. 7:7). Recognizing our poverty is the first step towards real spiritual wealth (Rev. 3:17-18, John 9:40-41). Paradoxically, by entering mourning, we position ourselves to be comforted, and to receive unspeakable joy.

### Mourning is about Humility.

James teaches us that “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”



There is a simple way to guarantee God's opposition to your life: live in pride. There is also a simple way to guarantee the flow of God's grace in your life: live a life of humility! 10 Days is a season of positioning ourselves to receive grace through humility:

- Fasting is a way to physically humble ourselves
- Prayer and Worship, along with attendant expressions of thanksgiving, praise, supplication, and glory to God are expressions of our humility and dependence on God.
- Confession of Sin and Repentance express humility to God.
- Uniting with other believers expresses our need for one another.
- Stopping our normal activity to wait on God is perhaps the greatest way busy people can humble themselves throughout 10 Days. In these Sabbath days we revel in His sufficiency.

As Matthew chapter five says, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." By stopping and sitting in the low place of mourning, we open wide an avenue for the grace of God to flow to us, our families, and our cities.

Can you imagine a city where every person, family, business, and institution are postured simultaneously in the place of humility, and consequently positioned to receive the grace of God? How would God respond if a city sought Him in that way? That is what our goal is during 10 Days—to create a spiritual "low pressure system" that attracts the torrential rain of heaven over entire cities and regions. Now imagine that happening on a global scale and you're starting to see what's God may be after—a window opened in heaven through mourning and humility for grace to be poured out and flood the earth!

### **Mourning is about Desire**

John 15:7 says, "If you remain in me, and my words remain in you, *ask whatever you **desire***, and it shall be done for you." In calling for the people of God to "mourn", *we are calling for desire to be awakened*.

As we humble ourselves by setting aside normal activity, remaining in Him, meditating on His words, *our hearts will begin to bring forth holy desires*, dreams of our hearts that emerge from union with His heart.

As John 15:7 shows us, *prayers of desire that come from abiding in Jesus, and having His words abide in us, are prayers that the Father cannot help but answer*. 10 Days is about entering into that John 15 reality in a special way for a season of time, so that we can see holy desire awakened in the heart of every believer, leading to answered prayer, fruitful lives, and glory to God!

### **Three Types of Mourning**

#### **1. Personal Repentance:** Living a Transformed Life.

Real repentance is a beautiful thing, leading us out of false and sinful mindsets and into the "glorious liberty" that is ours in Christ.

- **Understanding Personal Repentance:** Repentance is much more than confessing our sins to God, although that is often the first step. Repentance in Greek means “changing our mind”. It is when our minds and hearts stop agreeing with lies and come into agreement with God’s mind and heart. As we are “transformed by the renewing our minds” we grow up towards maturity, “the fullness of the stature that belongs to Christ.” (Rom. 12:2 and Eph 4:13)
- **In Quietness and Trust:** To enter Repentance, we do not have to “beat ourselves up” over every perceived failing or enter intense introspection. If we will simply stop, wait on the Lord, and allow Him to be the focus of our mind and heart, he will begin to lead us into repentance, and we can just follow Him. This simplicity in repentance will save us from legalistic pitfalls or spiritual pride that can accompany a focus on repentance. As Isaiah 30:15 says, “In repentance and rest you shall be saved, in quietness and trust is your strength.” Let’s have the transforming power of the Holy Spirit without the heavy yoke of legalism. This is true Godly repentance that leads to joy, peace, and righteousness in the Holy Spirit!
- **Humility:** As we humble ourselves before God, we position ourselves to receive grace. As the Scripture says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” As this grace comes to us over an extended season (10 Days), we begin to experience spiritual renewal, like sap flowing back into the branches of a tree in the spring. This spiritual life, flowing from the heart of God, causes spiritual growth and maturity in each of us.
- **Right Relationships:** One of the most important areas of repentance is related to broken relationships, especially those with others in the Body of Christ. Be sensitive to how the Lord may lead you during the 10 Days to reach out to and reconcile with other believers. It is not all about Prayer and Worship. As the Lord teaches, it is better to leave our gift at the altar and be reconciled to our brothers and sisters (Matt. 5:22-24).

**This really works!** It is amazing to watch the work that God does in individual lives over these 10 Days. This season of consecration often begins a work of personal transformation that revolutionizes that individual’s life and can often lead people into to new callings and ministries as well. Ultimately, personal transformation of individuals in the Body of Christ *is the foundation on which everything else must be built. If we as His Body look like Jesus, we will see the changes we desire in the world!*

- **Starting Point:** Study and meditate on the scriptures below for the duration of 10 Days to focus on Repentance, Humility and Personal Transformation.
  - **Matthew 5-7:** How we think in the Kingdom.
  - **Ephesians 1:** Our Identity in Christ.
  - **Ephesians 3:14-21:** Our Trajectory in Christ.
  - **John 13:34-35:** How we should Love one Another.
  - **James 3 and 4:** Taming our Tongues, Wisdom from Above.
  - **Proverbs 3:** Learning Faith.
  - **Romans 12:** How we ought to live.
  - **Exodus 20:1-17:** The 10 Commandments.

These Scriptures are just a starting point. Open up your Bible and let God lead you!

## **2. Intercessory Mourning:** Crying out for the Fulfillment of God's Promises in Scripture

- **Daniel Chapter 9** is a model of “**intercessory mourning**”. Daniel is motivated to prayer and fasting by reading a statement of what God intends to do in the Scriptures. He understands that God has declared that Jerusalem would be desolate for 70 years, realizes that 70 years has nearly passed, and begins to fast, pray, confess his sins and the sins of his people with mourning, asking God to bring captive Israel back to Jerusalem.
- **Passive or Active?** Daniel understood God's purposes in His time. Rather than take a passive approach, Daniel engaged with the promises of God through fasting, prayer, and mourning. He understood that God looks for human beings to partner with him in his actions in human history.

Based on His example, we need to repent of a passive, prayerless lifestyle and begin to ask God:

- What are Scriptural Promises that you have made that have not yet been fulfilled?
  - How can we partner with you in intercessory mourning like Daniel for the fulfillment of your promises?
- **You Have a Role:** As in the story of Daniel, we have a role to play in the fulfillment of God's promises, the role of an “Intercessor”. An intercessor is a go between, an advocate, who represents one side's interests to another. God has revealed to us His will so that we, as human beings, will ask Him to do what He has already revealed He will do. Likewise, we have an intercessory role with our fellow human beings, to communicate the desires of God's heart to them.
  - **God's Desire, Our Desire:** When the desires of God's heart become the desires of our hearts, and the *status quo* of this evil age becomes impossible for us to tolerate. The discord between what God desires and what we see in the world creates a tension in us that causes our hearts to enter mourning for the fulfillment of God's purposes.

Our prayers are an essential part of God's plan to fulfill His purposes and promises in as revealed in Scripture. (Rev. 5:8, Luke 18)

Here are four major promises of God that remain significantly unfulfilled. Throughout 10 Days, we turn our attention to these things, lay hold of them by faith, and cry out to heaven for the fulfillment of all of God's promises. Our God is still the God of Daniel!

### **Four Major Biblical Promises: What We Are Asking God to Do**

Like Daniel, God has made us promises that will be fulfilled before the Lord returns. All four of these major promises require our participation, both in prayer and action. Also, all four of these promises are interconnected and mutually dependent on one another.

As we seek God for 10 Days, these four great promises dominate our times of intercession.

## **Promise 1: The Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached to every nation and ethnicity.**

Scripture: Matt. 24:14 “The Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole earth, as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

Sample Prayers:

- Lord of the Harvest, send forth laborers into every tribe and nation and to the billions of people who have never heard the name of Jesus or the gospel message.
- Father, send your blessing on the declaration of the gospel especially to the unreached, the poor, and the oppressed.
- Father, let this promise be fulfilled “in our generation”.

## **Promise 2: There will be unprecedented, supernatural unity among followers of Jesus.**

Scripture: John 17:23 “Let them be one as we are one...that the world may know that you sent me and have loved them even just as you love me.”

Sample Prayers:

- Father, we believe in faith that “Jesus gets what He prays for.” Show us how we can be part of seeing Him receive the answer to His prayer.
- Father, we ask for the breaking down of historic enmities and barriers within the broader Christian community and the establishment of John 13:34-35 love for one another.
- Father, we believe that the unity you desire is one of holiness and truth, not of compromising your word. We pray for purity, fullness, maturity, and unity in the church our city, region, and around the world.

## **Promise 3: There will be a global outpouring of the Holy Spirit.**

Scripture: Joel 2:28-30 “I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh...Before the great and awesome day of the Lord.”

Sample Prayers:

- Father, we desire that the outpouring of the Spirit that began on Pentecost would continue and be increased in our day.
- Father, we ask you to release “the best wine, saved for last” (John 2).
- Father, we pray that your servants would be enabled to “speak your word with great boldness” and that you would stretch out his hand to “heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant, Jesus.”

## **Promise 4: There will be Wide-Spread Salvation among the Jewish People.**

Scripture: Rom. 11:12,15 “If their loss means riches for the Nations, how much greater riches will their fullness bring...For if their [Israel, the Jewish people] rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?”

Sample Prayers:

- Father, we pray for spiritual blindness to be lifted from Israel, and that Gentile believers would stir unbelieving Israel to jealousy (Romans 11:11,26)
- Father, we thank you for Messianic Jewish believers around the world who have come to know their Messiah, *Yeshua*. We rejoice in them and give preference to them in honor (Rom. 12:10). We ask for complete unity between Jew and Gentile believers (Ephesians 2).
- Father, we ask you to “pour on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication that they may look on the one whom they have pierced and mourn for Him as one mourns for an only son...” (Zech 12:10)

**The Four Major Promises Summarized:** The Lord’s Prayer is a fitting summary of all these beautiful promises:

Scripture: Matt. 6:9ff “Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be your name. Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...”

Sample Prayers:

- Father, let true justice be established on the earth and all the oppressed set-free. “Wipe every tear from our eyes” and let there be “no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain.”
- Father, we ask for you great name and the name of your Son to be honored, revered, and loved by all people.
- Father, we ask that our sins might be blotted out, that times of refreshing might come from your presence, and that you may send Jesus Christ...whom heaven must receive until the times of the restoration of all things (Acts 3:19-21).

## **3. “Mourning for the Bridegroom”: Longing for the Return of Jesus**

In Matthew 9:15, Jesus says, “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.”

In this passage, the Lord envisions a future season where he will not be physically present with the disciples. Because of His absence and their love and longing for Him, they will enter fasting

and mourning. 10 Days is an opportunity to enter the reality Jesus describes and predicts in Matthew 9:15.

➤ **The Lord's Return: Common Ground**

- Regardless of our various positions on the Lord's return, I'm sure that we can all agree on one thing—Jesus is coming back! As the Apostle's Creed states: "He is coming again to judge the living and the dead". So, while we may differ on various realities surrounding His coming, we agree on the basic fact—He's coming again!

➤ **We are to Ask for His Return:** I am also convinced we can agree to this, although it may not seem quite as intuitive.

- *God the Father wants us to ask for the Lord's Return.*
- Have you ever considered that when we pray, "Your Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven," that we are praying for the Lord's return? While I desire to see the Kingdom come *today* as much as the next person, we also need to understand that this prayer will not be answered *in fullness* until the Lord returns.
- The final prayer in the Bible is a prayer for the return of Jesus: "*Come, Lord Jesus*", so we are clearly on solid footing with this idea of praying for the Lord's Return (Rev. 22:20).

➤ **We are to Eagerly Desire His Return:** Praying for Christ's return is *less about words* and more about *the posture and desire of our hearts*. It is not as though saying the magic words "Come, Lord Jesus" over and over again will cause Him to suddenly split open the sky and make all things new. However, it is certainly true that He's returning for a Bride arrayed in beauty, without spot, wrinkle, or blemish.

- *A significant element of the Bride's beauty is her single-hearted desire for her Lord and husband.*
- There is an "appropriate" level of longing, desire, and heart preparation for the return of Christ that each believer is invited to experience, and that we are to display corporately. By and large, believers are a long way away from this appropriate level of desire (from heaven's perspective). Many of us are content with worldly pursuits, even thinking in our hearts "Lord, could you put that return off for a few years."
- We need to repent of a wrong heart attitude towards Christ's return and embrace a Biblical paradigm where every day is colored by an *eager desire* for the fullness of seeing Him face-to-face. This heart of longing for the return of Christ is likened to the longing of a Bride for her wedding day. We are meant as the Bride of Christ to experience this same intensity of longing for His coming.

➤ **Mourning for the Bridegroom:** Developing a heart of longing or *mourning* for the bridegroom is perhaps the most important aspect of the 10 Days. The return of Christ is described as a wedding, where we as his Church are the bride. Can you imagine a bride

who is just ho-hum about her upcoming marriage— “Darling, I love you, but...could we just put this off a few more years...or decades”?

- Jesus is looking for the Church to desire Him and His return just as He desires us and longs to come to us. The desire of a bride and husband to be joined is our clearest Biblical image of this desire. I believe He is looking for the desire of earth for His return to match the desire of heaven!
- Once again, this is not about advancing a particular theological position. Of the major theological positions out there on the Lord’s Return, who is opposed to believers longing for His coming? Far from being suspect or divisive, it is a clear mandate straight from God’s heart.

**Starting Point:** As with everything we do, we want to establish our prayers for the Lord’s return in the Scriptures. Here are several passages that touch on this theme of longing for the return of Jesus and some of the different language they use.

- **Matt. 9:15, Matt. 5:4:** “Mourning”
- **Romans 8:23-24:** “Groans and Labors of Child-birth”
- **Rom. 8:25, 1 Cor. 1:7:** “Eagerly Waiting”
- **Matt. 25:13:** “Watching and Praying”
- **2 Pet. 3:12:** “Longing for and Hastening the Day”
- **Rev. 19:7, Eph 5:27:** “Making Ready/Preparing”

10 Days is an opportunity to enter mourning for the Bridegroom and to connect at a heart level with the absence of Jesus Christ, an absence that allows sin, death, and hell’s continued influence over the earth. It is an opportunity to be a part of a global prayer meeting of like-hearted believers who are saying together with one voice, in word and deed, “**Come, Lord Jesus**”.