

REFUGEE

C H U R C H

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2021 Corporate Consecration

January 15 – February 4, 2021

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Over the last few years, we have seen the broader American church fall into a state of judgment, mainly because it made an idol of a political party. Somewhere along the way, the broader American church confused what the work of the Kingdom of God is. This is by no means the first time in the Church's history! The work of the Kingdom of God throughout church history has been confused with turning our spiritual call into political power.

But the Kingdom's agenda happens in a two-fold, parallel-track nature: spreading the Gospel of salvation by faith alone in Christ alone, AND advocating for all people made in the image of God to be treated according to the value He has placed on us all. We are called to both the "Great Commission" (Matt. 28:18-20) AND the "Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37-40)." The focus of our time of study and prayer over the next 21 days is to seek to align us, individually and corporately, back to those two original intents of the Lord Jesus for His Church.

Using the words of Jesus and of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I pray that we will open ourselves up to the hard work of allowing spiritual surgery to take place: He wants to create in us the right heart. Each day, there are scriptures to read and study, followed by a quote from Dr. King. You will also find some discussion and reflection materials, as well as some prayer suggestions.

Some days will be more challenging than others, not just physically but also spiritually. Read and re-read the scriptures. The reflection questions are intended to make us do some hard introspection. Some of the prayer suggestions will make you stretch and maybe even uncomfortable. But, it's all for the purpose of knowing Him better and preparing to serve Him better.

So, as we begin, let me share my prayer with you about us and this 21-day consecration:

Lord, I pray for Your guiding over these next 21 days. I pray for Your comfort on the tough, challenging days. I pray for Your grace. I pray for Your presence. I pray for each one of these, my brothers and sisters in Christ, as we place ourselves in Your hands to stretch us, grow us, re-align us, conforming us to the image of Christ.

Holy Spirit, we trust You to speak to us, to help Your Word to make sense to us, to lead and guide us into all truth. You said that Your word is living and active; that it cuts and heals at the same time. You said Your word will never return to You empty, but that it would accomplish all that You send it to do. Speak to us through the verses and passages. May we be open and honest with You, transparent and vulnerable before You, as You bring about Your will in new ways in our lives.

Lord, we don't fully know what to expect, but we trust You. We're a little anxious; we feel completely inadequate, but we understand that is exactly how You want us. Lord, I confess, as the undershepherd of this great people that I am taking some risks, but Your order to me was to make them armed with Your word and dangerous to the work of the enemy in the earth. But Lord I trust You! I trust You to work what is well-pleasing in Your sight in all of us. So, we commit ourselves to You and to Your work in us across the next 21 days. Have Your way! Glorify Yourself, we pray, in the name of Jesus!

Study and Prayer Guide

Friday, January 15

Day 1

Scripture Reading: Matthew 6:5-8; Matthew 23:13-15; Mark 7:1-9

In battling those who claimed the name of Christ but also supported segregation, King said “If any earthly institution or custom conflicts with God’s will, it is your Christian duty to oppose it. You must never allow the transitory, evanescent demands of man-made institutions to take precedence over the eternal demands of the Almighty God.”

Jesus wants us to live in the tension of looking to the Church to provide us with solid biblical teaching, but also evaluating and questioning what we are being taught. He wants us more loyal to Him and His will for our lives than to any institutions. Obeying God is the most important aspect of our relationship, and the best way to get all of the benefits of that relationship!

What are some things in my belief system that I got in the church, but not necessarily from the Word of God (i.e., I believe it, but I don’t know where to find it in the Bible)?

Ask the Lord to help you balance the relationship with the faith community and loyal obedience to Jesus only.

Saturday, January 16

Day 2

Scripture Reading: Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 9:14-27

Dr. King once said, “We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.”

The two parents in our Scripture reading today had experienced more disappointments, setbacks, and let-downs than we could imagine. Yet, both of them continued to believe, continued to seek, stayed persistent, struggling with their ability to keep believing based upon the turn-downs and the turn-offs. They kept believing until their faith led to reality!

Do I stop believing when what I’m hoping for doesn’t happen as soon as I want it to?

Do I have “okay” faith, or do I have “great faith” like the Gentile woman?

What do I need to pick back up, that I let go of because of disappointment?

For your prayer time today, make a list of things/people that you are believing God for, or a list of things/people that you gave up on when things didn’t happen fast enough. Pray for those things/people again starting today.

Sunday, January 17

Day 3

Scripture Reading: John 12:24-25; Luke 20:20-26

Dr. King once prayed, “Use me, God. Show me how to take who I am, who I want to be, and what I can do, and use it for a purpose greater than myself.”

Jesus’ challenge in our reading today is a call to dying to our selfishness and the control of our own lives, so that we could be a part of something greater than ourselves. Yet, Jesus is clear: we must get ourselves out of the way first.

In what areas do I need to die to my selfish desires?

Have I given myself to a cause and a purpose bigger than myself? Why or Why not?

What is my first step to giving myself to God’s purpose and causes that God can use me for?

Start your prayer time with a time of confession for any selfish things or actions that keep you from “dying to self” so that you can pray this same prayer that Dr. King prayed.

Monday, January 18

Day 4

Scripture Reading: Matthew 5:3-12; Mark 11:27-33

Dr. King borrowed a saying from one of his mentors, Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, who said, “The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in times of comfort and convenience, but where he stands in times of challenge and controversy.”

As our past national leadership has shown by a poor example, integrity is important; character matters. If we are to be about our Father’s Kingdom business, who we REALLY are is important. Today’s focus is to determine who we need to be in order to handle God’s business in these times of challenge and controversy.

Where are the areas of my integrity and character that I need to shore up with Christlikeness?

What have these troubling times revealed about me that I need to apply God’s principles to?

Pray Psalm 139:23-24 to the Lord, then take time to listen to His still, small voice about the areas in your heart and character that the Spirit wants you to work on.

Tuesday, January 19

Day 5

Scripture Reading: Luke 10:29-37; Mark 12:29-31

In several of his speeches, Dr. King would drop this statement: “Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’”

In the Kingdom of God, what we fight for is not power, but for others, our neighbors. Jesus even took time, in a parable, to define who our neighbors are. Yet “life’s most persistent and urgent question” still must be answered by each of us.

Am I serving the Lord by serving people or serving His greater cause?

Is God able to use the wisdom and experiences of my life in order to pour into empowering others? Why or why not?

In prayer, ask the Lord to open up ideas of avenues, causes, ministries, or movements that you could help or serve.

Wednesday, January 20

Day 6

Scripture Reading: Matthew 20:25-28

“Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve. You don’t have to have a college degree to serve. You don’t have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. And a soul generated by love.”

Greatness in the Kingdom is defined by our serving, not how big our platform is, or any of the things that the world uses to define it. In giving ourselves to Jesus, we are essentially saying we are willing to be given away to serve others.

Are my ambitions and dreams only about me and what I want out of life?

Is greatness in the Kingdom something I care about? Why or why not?

In your prayer times today, express to the Lord where you are with being willing to serve other people. Where there is hesitation or unwillingness, ask the Lord to help you with those areas and issues.

Thursday, January 21

Day 7

Scripture Reading: Luke 18:1-8

Many times during the struggle for civil rights, Dr. King had to address the setbacks and the lack of change at a quick pace. He would admonish people to, “Never succumb to the temptation of bitterness.”

It is so easy to lose heart and to become bitter, especially when people’s hearts and actions don’t change. Jesus’ antidote to the disappointment and bitterness is to pray rather than rant. Bitterness will make us “lose heart;” prayer moves the heart of God to action (Lk 10:8).

Have I allowed my disappoint turn into bitterness?

Why is bitterness such an easy temptation to fall into?

Why does my attitude toward the pace of justice help or hurt my effectiveness?

In your prayer time, ask the Lord to run a “diagnostic check” on your attitude and feelings (Ps. 139:23-24). Where the Spirit points out bitterness, anger, or unforgiveness, confess and repent.

Friday, January 22

Day 8

Scripture Reading: Matthew 5:17-20; Matthew 5:6

We can tell Dr. King’s vision of equality was wrapped up in his biblical understanding of God’s standard of justice, because he said, “No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a might stream” (Amos 5:24).

Jesus declares that His first coming was not about supporting or affirming the status quo; He came to ensure ALL of His promises in His Word is fulfilled! Likewise, we must not get comfortable with “just enough.” In Christ, we stretch past religion and must never be satisfied until “all is fulfilled.”

What in my life, my walk with God, in the struggle for justice have I gotten complacent, comfortable, and satisfied? Why/when did it happen?

What do I need to do to get my “hunger”/dissatisfaction with less than God’s fulfilled Word back in my life?

Ask the Lord to give you a holy dissatisfaction for the areas of your life and community and church that are seeing less than the complete fulfillment of God’s will for them.

Saturday, January 23

Day 9

Scripture Reading: Luke 6:27-36

Dr. King wrote, “In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline.”

The reason why human kingdoms and politics cannot bring the Kingdom of God into reality is because, once humans win, they tend to punishing the previous power-holders for oppressing them. We are seeing that play out even now in our day and time, but human anger doesn't produce God's righteousness (James 1:20)!

Are there feelings of vengeance or desires for revenge in my heart?

Am I ready to do what it takes to discipline my emotions and keep my anger in check in order to righteously participate in God's Kingdom quest for justice?

What should be the markers I use to distinguish between justified self-defense, and copying the vengeful behavior of the world?

In your prayer times today, ask the Lord to help you develop the emotional discipline you need to be an active participant in His Kingdom program for justice.

Sunday, January 24

Day 10

Scripture Reading: John 1:45-49; Luke 6:43-45

Dr. King once wrote, “You will change your mind; you will change your looks; you will change your smile, laugh, and ways, but no matter what you change, you will always be you.”

Externals can mask; they can change. But who we are on the inside, God alone sees and knows. Just as Jesus assured Nathanael that He saw him, we can know He sees us, too. And if we are going to produce “good fruit,” we have to open all that we are to Him.

Am I open and honest with God about who I REALLY am?

Have I allowed Him to work on my character so that I'm producing “good fruit”?

The challenge for today's prayer time is to talk to God in the shower (uncomfortable, I know!) as a way to be totally open and vulnerable with Him.

Monday, January 25

Day 11

Scripture Reading: Luke 14:27-33; Matthew 10:38-39

With the systems and powers that Dr. King confronted, he had to count the cost of his work. Which gave him the clarity to declare, “No one really knows why they are alive until they know what they’d die for.”

To participate in the Kingdom’s confrontation with earthly systems, we have to be totally sold out to the cause of Christ. It is only in our willingness to lay it all down for Him, that we actually gain an understanding of purpose in this life.

What are the things I am willing to give my life for? (Hint: if there are more than 3, you’re either lying to yourself, or it’s time to re-prioritize your commitments)

If those things are so important to me, what am I currently doing to protect, preserve, or advance them?

In prayer, ask the Lord to help you focus more energy and action to the things that mean the most to you in this year.

Tuesday, January 26

Day 12

Scripture Reading: Matthew 18:2-6; Luke 18:9-14

One of the things Dr. King accomplished was to raise the esteem of an oppressed people through statements like this: “No person has the right to rain on your dreams.”

Similarly, Jesus’ actions and teaching helps us to see that our value to Him is such that we don’t have to allow anyone to make us feel like “less than” or that we don’t deserve to be wherever He puts us!

Who do I let make me feel like I’m not worthy? Why do I let them have that kind of power over me, when she/he is not named “Jesus”?

What do I need to work in my thinking, demeanor, or even body language that cuts out the feelings being de-valued by others?

For your prayer time, find some biblical affirmations of who God says you are to speak/declare/say aloud about yourself.

Wednesday, January 27

Day 13

Scripture Reading: Matthew 10:29-31; Luke 11:10-13

Dr. King's stance on political programs was based upon biblical standards of the value each human has from God. Therefore, Dr. King said, "I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality, and freedom for their spirits."

As a part of the Kingdom's agenda, we pursue equality, freedom, and justice for others because everyone is made in the image of God. We must not live under anyone else's standards of what we're worth, or what we should or should not have.

Where do my standards of what any other person should or shouldn't have come from?

Who do I look down upon, or who do I think is not worth being treated equally and fairly? Do I think God shares my views?

Do I act/vote/participate in any programs that seek to exclude others from being treated equally and fairly?

Actively and intentionally pray for the people that you have de-valued in the past.

Thursday, January 28

Day 14

Scripture Reading: Matthew 10:27-28; Mark 13:9-11; Matthew 5:13-16

In seeking to call out those closet-supporters of the movement, Dr. King said, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

This is not a time to be quiet; not when WE have the Truth! If we want our lives to count, we must stand ready to speak out, speak up, defend, advocate for, and act. He has already promised to supply us with whatever it is we need, as long as we refuse to be silent.

In those moments when I know I should speak up for what is right, why do I shrink back from saying something? Where is that coming from?

Am I intimidated from being singled out, or is it a fear that I will not know the right way to communicate?

During prayer times today, ask the Lord to help you begin to notice and use the opportunities that arise for you to stand up and speak up for what is right.

Friday, January 29

Day 15

Scripture Reading: Matthew 10:11-14; Luke 9:23-25; John 12:24-29

Dr. King once encouraged, “If you can’t fly then run, if you can’t run then walk, if you can’t walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.”

Our God isn’t looking for perfection from us, just progress. Every day, we must pick up cross and follow; every day, we go to whatever is next to proclaim peace; every day, we have to keep believing, even if we don’t see the final product yet. We must all commit to doing whatever we can in each 24-hour period to keep moving forward!

What excuses or rationalizations do I make for not making adequate spiritual progress in my life?

What do I need to change up in my life/daily routine to keep moving forward every day?

Commit yourself to receiving the Lord’s help to remove excuses from not doing something to benefit your spiritual growth or the Kingdom’s agenda every day for the rest of this year.

Saturday, January 30

Day 16

Scripture Reading: John 6:1-14; Luke 20:20-26

Dr. King knew that every little bit helps. He once said, “If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way.”

Jesus never asks us to produce huge change. But He does ask us to contribute our part, no matter how small or insignificant it may seem to us. When we give back to Him what He has given to us, He can make an impact on thousands!

In what ways/areas have I not contributed my part because I thought it wasn’t enough?

Where does the thinking come from that what I have to offer is somehow insignificant?

What do I need to do to change that in me?

In today’s prayer time, ask God to remove whatever mental or psychological barriers that keep you from contributing what God gave you to help out.

Sunday, January 31

Day 17

Scripture Reading: John 3:3-8; Luke 9:61-62

Many forget that Martin Luther King was first and foremost a Baptist preacher, and forget that he said things like this: “By opening our lives to God in Christ, we become new creatures. This experience, which Jesus spoke of as the new birth, is essential if we are to be transformed nonconformists.”

Our faith in Jesus is what allows us to work to bring the Kingdom’s agenda to bear on the social ills and evils of our world. We are being transformed into the image of Jesus, not to get along or go along with the ways of the world, but to contribute to the salvation AND social uplift of people.

In what ways have I divorced my faith in Jesus from the work of lending a hand-up in life? Where did that come from? How did I develop that mindset?

How should my faith in Christ call me to be a non-conformist in the circles and spaces I occupy day-to-day?

As you pray today, ask the Lord to give you a burden for those around you who need to be saved and for those that you can serve in a way that will lighten their load.

Monday, February 1

Day 18

Scripture Reading: Matthew 10:34-39; Luke 11:23; Luke 9:49-50

Dr. King once said about those people who disagreed with the violence of segregation, but did not public speak out or help the civil rights cause, “He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it.”

Jesus clearly set forth that His earthly and on-going mission was about causing a conflict that would force people to choose sides. There can be no spectators in Kingdom activity. Either we’re actively taking part or, through our silence or spectating, we prove that we’re actually working against the cause of Christ.

When and in what contexts have I kept my mouth shut and actually let evil be done?

What are some evil people or practices I need to stand against in my world?

In your prayer times today, ask the Lord to give you the courage and boldness necessary to protest against unfair or evil practices in your world.

Tuesday, February 2

Day 19

Scripture Reading: Luke 11:39-42; Matthew 23:23-24

We have all heard that Dr. King said, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

Jesus called us to actively be involved in addressing injustice, providing acts of mercy to those who need it, and proving our faith by who we serve. And to claim a commitment to faith system that doesn’t push us to do those “weightier matters” is a sham! Jesus cares more about our standing up to injustices and inequality than He does how committed we are to our church.

How do I address injustice and inequality in my life and lifestyle? Am I just a social critic or an active participant?

Have I ever considered that my commitment to social justice is the same as my commitment to my worship in financial giving? Have I considered that He expects both from me?

Take some of your prayer time today to specifically pray against racism, sexism, classism, and the unequal and unfair treatment of the elderly, the disabled, the LGBTQ+ community, immigrants, children with no families, and those locked up in the judicial system.

Wednesday, February 3

Day 20

Scripture Reading: John 3:19-21; 12:35-36; Luke 11:35-36

Dr. King once said, “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.”

As those with the light within us, who walk in the light, and who have been called to be light in the midst of the world’s darkness, we need to think seriously about how we act, what we say, and what we do that gives off light into the darkness.

What are the dark deeds and dark places that I need to impact with my light?

What darkness have I allowed to exist in my life or in my sphere of influence?

With how I live, am I driving out darkness, or is my light being overcome by the darkness?

In your prayer time, ask the Lord for the wisdom, discipline, and discernment needed to be a light-bearer in the midst of the darkness around you.

Thursday, February 4

Day 21

Scripture Reading: John 9:4; Matthew 5:16; Matthew 21:28-31

In answer to a group of clergy who asked Dr. King if it was the right time to fight against racism and segregation, he said, “The time is always right to do what is right.”

There is no time like the present. If not now, then when? If not you, then who? If Jesus has allowed our time on earth to extend to today, let’s not delay in getting involved in working the works of Him who sent us!

Why do I get the urge to procrastinate with the things that I know are the right things to get involved in? Why do I do that?

How is it that I find time to do all the things I want to do, but seem to never have time for the righteous, Kingdom things that I know the Lord has put in my path?

In your prayer time today, pray the statements of 1 Samuel 3:9 and Isaiah 6:8d to the Lord.