

RAISE THE MARK

December 2005

*O Lord, open my lips,
That my mouth may
declare Your praise. For
You do not delight in
sacrifice, otherwise I
would give it; You are
not pleased with burnt
offering. The sacrifices
of God are a broken
spirit; A broken and a
contrite heart;
O God, You will
not despise.*

—PSALM 51:15-17

Reflection & Praise

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person. —COLOSSIANS 4:2-6

RENEW YOUR ATTITUDE OF THANKSGIVING BY PRAISING GOD FOR:

- specific ways you have experienced His greatness, His power, and His grace.
- specific ways He has protected, guided, and directed you.
- specific ways you are seeing Him expose, deepen, strengthen and convict you.
- the ways He is growing us through the “Journey.”
- specific ways He has exposed materialism in your life.
- specific ways He has provided for us as a church (financially, physically, and through gifted people).

Confession & Petition

Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. —COLOSSIANS 3:1-8

- Ask God to reveal areas where your mind is set on things on the earth and not above.
- Examine and confess how your heart is focused on treasures on earth.
- Acknowledge and confess ways you are walking in immorality, impurity, worldly passion, evil desire, and greed.
- Confess ways you have allowed anger to rule you.
- Confess any bitterness, gossip, slander, or people-pleasing He is exposing in your life.

We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. —1 JOHN 3:16-18

- Pray that God would open our eyes to the ways He desires to use us in the lives of those experiencing hardship.
- Pray for the churches in the hurricane-impacted areas as they love those in their midst.
- Pray we would love in deed and action, and not just in word.
- Pray for those around the world experiencing persecution and hardship.

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. —COLOSSIANS 3:12-17

- Pray that we would be diligent to pursue unity and deal with conflict.
- Pray for those far from God in your midst (your Top 10).
- Pray that marriages in our body would be exposed in the ways they are drifting in darkness and would be growing in oneness and unselfishness.
- Pray that the singles in our body would be encouraged, nourished and joyful in their relationship with Christ.
- Pray that our youth would lead and influence their peers as they are drawn to Christ.
- Pray that all in our body would avail their hearts to Christ and allow Him to “stir them” as they consider our facility opportunity.

Communion

For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. —COLOSSIANS 1:13-15

Family Time

Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. —EPHESIANS 5:11-13

This is the time to share specific areas in which you personally are struggling or experiencing victory. It is also the time for you to openly confess and “expose to the light” any area in which you are entangled in sin and to give the body an opportunity to pray for you.