## ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 5

Issue 3

**AUGUST 3, 2025** 

#### Healing (Prayer)



Jelly Roll shares a common dilemma in one of his hit songs released two years ago, which starts out with the realization, "I only talk to God when I need a favor. And I only pray when I ain't got a prayer." His first stanza ends with, "But God, I need a favor."

Welcome to episode two of our series, *Prayer*. This week, we focus on prayers for healing. Not just healing from physical ailments, though. The stories from this week's chapter in our companion book cover a wide range of requests, from help recovering from addictions to cancer and grief.

Page 2

#### Asking (Prayer)



The images of starving children coming from the war zone in Gaza are heartbreaking. Opposition groups in Israel are labeling what is happening genocide. The Israeli Prime Minister claims no children are starving, while other officials, who don't deny the obvious, blame Hamas for preventing aid

from getting to families in need.

I do not doubt that people are praying for food, both in Gaza and around the world. I know I have. So far, war has been prioritized over humanitarian assistance. Other nations are trying to help, but the obstacles have proven to be too great.

Page 13

#### VEGGIES WILL BE READY SOON!





#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

| Asking                         | 1  |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Healing                        | 1  |
| Healing                        | 2  |
| Coming up this week            | 3  |
| In our prayers                 | 3  |
| Upcoming Worship/Book Club     | 4  |
| Upcoming Worship Series/Heaven | 5  |
| Feed Flint                     | 6  |
| Feed Flint                     | 7  |
| Life Group Ouestions           | 8  |
| Support your Local Farm        | 9  |
| Support your local farm        | 10 |
| Book Club News                 | 11 |
| Healing                        | 12 |
| Asking                         | 13 |
| Asking                         | 14 |
| Angel Closet                   | 15 |
| Kroger Rewards                 | 16 |
| Upcoming Worship Series/Heaven | 17 |

When God answers our requests, we celebrate. But when we feel ignored, we want to understand why. In fact, "why" might be our default question for many things we blame on God that seem pointless.

Since humans thrive on meaning, "why" is our most crucial emotional fuel. "We're simply far more likely to accept a change," explains Alex Lickerman, M.D. In a *Psychology Today* article, "if we understand the reason for it." Even if we don't benefit and it causes us harm, as long as the "why" satisfies our sense of fairness, we're far more likely to accept change and even embrace it.

The closest example of an official formula for prayer, found in scripture, is the time when Jesus taught His disciples how to pray. The Lord's Prayer comes out of this story.

Jesus began by addressing God with intimacy. "Our Father" conveys a more personal relationship than a transactional one. Nevertheless, Jesus didn't shy away from requests. However, His focus was more on needs than wants.

Forgive us, as we forgive others, on the other hand, sounds like a form of bargaining. More relevant, however, is the humility conveyed in our conversations with God. We're all in need of mercy,

but shouldn't expect it if we're unwilling to offer mercy to others.

Prayer, for many of us, often comes in the form of complaints and requests, which is understandable when we're hurting. And "why" accompanies most of our complaints.

Scripture sometimes addresses why, especially in the Old Testament. But the common answer we get in most cases is often unsatisfying. The people we read about in scripture believed that a connection exists between our actions and outcomes. Regardless, however, of what people did or didn't do, whatever happened, it was because God decided to or said so.

Perhaps the most well-known example is the story of Job, found in a book titled the same. The Book of Job is part of what is called the wisdom section of the Bible. The Book of Job is regarded as a classic of wisdom literature.

Job is the poster child for bad things happening to good people. Job was a wealthy man with a large house, a family, and many friends. He was a model husband, citizen, churchgoer, and more. Job had it together and did everything the way things are supposed to be done. But then Job lost everything, including his wealth, his family, and his health.

His good fortune symbolizes what most of us think life should be like for those of us who play by the rules. Good people come out on top, and bad people don't. Except life doesn't seem to work that way, and the number of exceptions we're experiencing recently is off the hook.

Job's fortunes turn to crap, and he loses everything. His estate burns down, he loses his family, and Job develops a horrible skin disease. He becomes homeless and lives outside the town with the other lepers.

Not all of Job's friends abandoned him. But when they went to visit him, they lectured Job on the reality that surely his fate was because of something he had done. According to Job's friends, while everyone thought that Job was a model citizen, they no longer believed this was the case. "You need to confess your failures to God and ask for mercy," his friends advised him.

However, while Job also believed that God rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked, Job lived his life in a manner befitting his character. He was a believer who lived according to the rules. So Job took his complaints to God. Job believed it was God who had to answer for his plight, and he demanded to know why this was happening to him.

Page 12

Volume 5 Issue 3

IN OUR PRAYERS

Virginia Bigger Sylvia Pittman Mirium Watson Fred Hans
Jonathon Misner
Terrance Williams



FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Dean Lamoreaux

Norma Buzzard

Nancy Elston

COMING UP THIS WEEK: AUGUST 4—10

Angel Closet (at South Flint Soup Kitchen) Mon Aug 4 11am-12N Produce will be available each Aug 5 Tue 9am-until gone week, along with canned goods, until further notice Angel Closet 11am-12N Angel Closet Aug 6 Wed 11am-12N Angel Closet Thu Aug 7 11am-12N Angel Closet Aug 8 Fri 11am-12N Aug 9 Sat Aug 10 Sun 10:30am New Beginnings Contemporary Worship

(We are live on <u>Facebook</u> and our newly launched <u>YouTube channel</u>. You can find these links along with more information about us on our website at (<u>FlintAsbury.org</u>.)

## Upcoming Worship Series "Prayer"

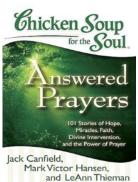


In our last worship series, *Heaven*, we gave thought to what heaven might be like. And we considered the plausibility of someone in heaven speaking to the living. Is it possible? It would be a miracle if it were to happen.

In this series, *Prayer*, we give thought to words, mostly going the other direction. We talk to God, but we also hope to hear back. If not audibly, we hope to see evidence that our prayers were heard. Well, at least some of them once in a while.

Page 5

### Book Club News



There are hundreds of books under the umbrella title *Chicken Soup for the Soul.* So many that this title is now its own publishing

company. Out of the hundreds of options, we've chosen one special

edition of our new series, *Prayer*.

According to their website, motivational speakers Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen started in 1993 with the idea that people could help each other by sharing stories. The two had shared stories told to them over the years, and their audiences kept asking if any of the stories had ever been published.

## Asbury Staff

Rev. Dr. Tommy McDoniel Pastor Kevin Croom Executive Director/CDC Connie Portillo Office Secretary Kim Sims Finance Director Terry Kinze Ops Manger/CDC Sylvia Pittman **Empowerment Arts** Board & Leadership Chair Jim Craig Israel Unger (Izzy) Business Service Mar Terrance Williams Arts Center Mgr Venus McBeth South Flint Soup Kitchen

## Leadership in Worship & Service

Tony & Mirium
Cyndi
Anthony & Jim
Jonathon & Terrance
Yasheah & Mirium
Christine
Welcome Team
Worship Leader
Voship Leader
Voship Leader
Voship Ushers
Production Team
Nursery
Cafe

But when the two tried to get their first book published, they were turned down by every single big publisher. Fortunately, the book was published by a small health and wellness publisher in Florida named HCl. After the owner, Peter Vegso, read some of the stories, he decided to give the book a chance.

Since then, more than 100 million copies have been sold in the U.S. and Canada, 400 titles, and translations into more than 40 languages. Their goal is to spread happiness, inspiration, hope, and wellness across the globe, "changing your world one story at a time."

Page 10

Volume 5 Issue 3 Page 5

### Upcoming Worship Series — "Prayer"

The gospels share that Jesus often prayed, and Matthew and Luke include stories about Jesus teaching His disciples how to pray. This is our source for that which we call the Lord's Prayer.

We also learn about the importance of humility as we pray. After all, we are dependent on God for all that we have. Fortunately, God showers us with love and good things. Unfortunately, humankind is more often out of rhythm with God's intention. Therefore, God's plans are thwarted by selfishness, cruelty, and arrogance.

But we continue to pray not just for ourselves, but for others. God hears our prayers and God acts for our good.

For motivation and some content, we'll utilize a book of stories from people who share their experiences with prayer. Our companion book is part of the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series. You can read more about this book in the Book Club article, which includes a reading schedule.

Here is the outline of our series:

| <u>Episode</u> | <u>Sundays</u> | <u>Title</u> |
|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| One            | July 20        | Rhythm       |
| Two            | July 27        | Healing      |
| Three          | August 3       | Asking       |
| Four           | August 10      | Grateful     |
| Five           | August 31      | Trust        |
| Six            | September 7    | Angels       |

Please join us each Sunday at 10:30 a.m. We share our weekly episodes on <u>Facebook</u> and our <u>YouTube channel</u>, and go live at 10:30 a.m. You can find these links and more information about us, or join our live broadcast on our <u>website</u>, <u>FlintAsburyChurch.org</u>.

**Pastor Tommy** 

Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, LeAnn Thieman. *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Answered Prayers:* 101 Stories of Hope, Miracles, Faith, Divine Intervention, and the Power of Prayer.

Cos Cob, CT: Chicken Soup for the Soul, 2011.





Donate to our Feed Flint Campaign by visiting: flintasbury.org/feed-flint-donate

| LIFE GROUP   | OUESTION    | S & MORE:  |
|--------------|-------------|------------|
| TILL DIFFORT | Q CLIDITOI1 | D CLITCHE. |

Ask, and you will receive. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you.

Matthew 7:7-12

#### QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:

- 1. Read Matthew 7:7-12. How often do your prayers ask, seek, or knock? Reflect on a time when one of your prayers was answered. How did you feel afterwards?
- 2. Read the article in this week's Circuit Rider titled Asking. Reflect on a time when you asked God for something or to do something and your prayer wasn't answered. Looking back, did God respond in a different way than you wanted? What are some of your recent requests that ask, seek, or knock?
- 3. How can your group members help you be more receptive to hearing and understanding the Word of God this week? Pray for one another to be blessed by the Holy Spirit with greater courage.



Miracles happen all the time and became a major theme from our last series. The stories in our companion book for the new series of answered prayers are sure to leave you in awe. We hope these stories will not only inspire you but also strengthen your faith and hope.

These stories offer testimony that God is actively involved in our lives. And that God hears our heartfelt hopes and needs. The stories include miraculous true accounts of healing, divine appointments, angels among us, signs from above, timely gifts, and other answered prayers.

Since each story exists independently of the others, you can choose to read all of them or just a few. Perhaps read one story each day as part of a daily devotional routine. For our series, we'll select one or two stories from a specific chapter in case you want to read ahead.

If you choose to follow along, I suggest using the following schedule:

| Sunday's    | <u>Pages</u> | <u>Chapters</u> |
|-------------|--------------|-----------------|
| July 20     | 4 - 45       | One             |
| July 27     | 116 - 153    | Four            |
| August 3    | 182 - 217    | Six             |
| August 10,  | 252 -293     | Eight           |
| August 31   | 294 - 327    | Nine            |
| September 7 | 328 - 351    | Ten             |

We'll have a few books available for purchase. New copies of the paperback edition are available through Amazon for \$11.60, and used copies in good condition are usually under \$6, including shipping. This book may also be available at the local library.

Our Book Club does not meet as a group. However, our weekly messages reference that week's chapters. You can anticipate spoiler alerts unless you keep up with the pace. You can purchase your own copy or visit your local library.

You can contact our office with questions by phone or simply type your question or enter a prayer request on our website's homepage — <u>FlintAsburyChurch.org</u>.

Pastor Tommy

Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, LeAnn Thieman. *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Answered Prayers: 101 Stories of Hope, Miracles, Faith, Divine Intervention, and the Power of Prayer.* Cos Cob, CT: <u>Chicken Soup for the Soul,</u> 2011.

Cash or checks can be sent to/dropped off at South Flint Soup Kitchen, 3410 Fenton Road, Flint, MI 48507. Please make checks out to South Flint Soup Kitchen!

Online at www.mightycause.com/feedflint

Donations can be dropped off Monday-Friday 11am-12Noon. Calling ahead is not necessary, but our needs change frequently, so calling ahead of time is a good idea!

Give time! We need volunteers!!! Volunteers arrive at 9:30am and are done by 12:30pm. Tasks include handing out lunches, assisting in the Angel Closet, light cleaning, putting together items to pass out to clients, and more.

Refer people!!

Questions??? Call 810-239-3427

or email southflintsoupkitchen@gmail.com

Healing (Prayer) ... cont from pg 2

After several speeches by Job to provoke God to explain why so many bad things had happened to him, God responds. "Who are you to question my wisdom with your ignorant, empty words?" God began (Job 38:1-2).

Job got his response, but it wasn't what he expected. For one, God didn't say, "Remember that time when you did this or you failed to do that?" What Job did or didn't do never comes up.

Instead, God speaks to Job like a Father about to give His son a good talking to. "Stand up straight and answer the questions I ask you!" God continues. (Job 38:3).

What questions do you think the Creator of the Universe might ask Job? What questions does God ask you and me when we' re angry and expecting God to explain something terrible that happened?

"Were you there when I made the world?" God begins by reminding Job who he is talking to. "If you know so much, tell me about it. Who decided how large it would be? Who stretched the measuring line over it? Do you know all the answers?" (Job 38:4-5).

Among other infractions of holy etiquette, it appears that Job was missing the awe that should come naturally whenever we speak to God. And he made an erroneous assumption. Job believed that our blessings are rewards for the good things we do, and whenever bad things happen, it is a punishment for the bad.

Were you there when I made the world? If you know so much, tell me about it.

Job 38:1-8

And Job was learning, along with the rest of us, that the universe doesn't revolve around any one of us. Nor does it revolve around people who do everything right or people who don't. Instead, the universe was architected out of tremendous, creative power that is beyond our comprehension.

Fortunately, the world was created by a loving God who genuinely takes the time to listen and respond to each of us, regardless of merit, credentials, or our ability to speak or hear. And often, God needs to remind us that His wisdom is far beyond our understanding. However, when in doubt, go to what Jesus had to say and do likewise.

You can join us each Sunday in person or online by clicking the button on our *website's* homepage. *Click here to watch*. This button takes you to our *YouTube channel*. You can find more information about us on our website

#### at *FlintAsburyChurch.org*.

This is a reminder that we publish a weekly newsletter called the Circuit Rider. You can request this publication by email by sending a request to *FlintAsburyUMC@gmail.com*, or let us know when you send a message through our *website*. We post an archive of past editions on our website under Connect - choose *Newsletters*.

Pastor Tommy

Our series was inspired by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor
Hansen, LeAnn Thieman.
Chicken Soup for the Soul:
Answered Prayers: 101 Stories of Hope, Miracles, Faith, Divine Intervention, and the Power of Prayer. Cos Cob, CT: Chicken Soup for the Soul, 2011.

Alex Lickerman, M.D. Reviewed by Jessica Schrader . "Why We Need to Know Why." © Psychology Today, November 15, 2010. Retrieved from: <u>link</u>

Where is God? According to scripture, God is in the pictures, holding the starving children as they take their last breath. Comforting parents as they cry out. And waiting for humanity to show mercy.

The politics of Israel's circumstances are complicated. Hunger is not.

A couple of weeks ago, I listened to a cabinet member claim that no one has died as a result of the U.S. cutting off funding for the United States Agency for International Development, better known as USAID. While his denial may be good politics, his claim is clothed in camouflage, denial, and lies.

He justified defunding USAID, claiming that our country can no longer afford to borrow money to help other countries while we have so much need here. I was angered and a bit insulted by his oversimplification of our nation's finances. Does he believe that we're that stupid?

Especially, after Congress recently passed a bill that experts anticipate will add \$2.4 trillion to our national debt, which features massive tax cuts for the most wealthy among us, funding to build numerous prisons, while making substantial cuts for medical assistance to our most vulnerable.

We aren't borrowing money to help others. We borrow to keep the wealthy from paying their fair share. It's a matter of perspective. If our priorities were to come out of the gospel instead of the playbook for conservatives, we would say that we can no longer afford to borrow money to finance the wealthy and large corporations. And our tax revenues would first go to support not only the most vulnerable in our country, but also those elsewhere.

God does answer prayers, but there are over eight billion people living on the same planet. God sorts out the requests and focuses on those in need first. Just as scripture says. There is no indication that God first takes care of the wealthy.

Chapter six of our companion book is filled with stories of asking, seeking, and knocking. We begin with Sandi and her husband, Paul, returning to the ashes left from a fire that destroyed their home. Over 2,500 homes were destroyed by five different wildfires in Southern California. Paul prayed that God would give his wife "kisses on the cheek" so she would know that she is still loved.

Her kisses began with finding a picture of her father unharmed, along with her mother's wedding Bible. Sandi grew up as one of four daughters of missionaries who knew what it was like to face human-made devastation and suffering.

We also meet a pastor trapped in a snowstorm, praying for someone to find him in time, only to be rescued by the owner of the property where he was trespassing. We also meet a mother who, after losing her son, prays and receives a dream that allows her to see her son's face and find some comfort in her grief. A woman desperately searching for a lost glove, a gift from her deceased sister. finds it after Elaine, working the checkout line, prays that she will find it.

God wants the best for us. In the Book of Jeremiah, God says through the prophet, "I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for (Jeremiah 29:11). Asking (Prayer) ... cont from pg 13

Matthew tells us that Jesus asks us to consider, "Would any of you who are parents give your children a stone when they ask for bread?" (Matthew 7:9). Of course not.

Ask, and you will receive. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you.

Matthew 7:7-12

Jesus goes on to illustrate the contrast between human parents and God's will for humanity. Of course, God provides for those in need. But God offers you and me the opportunity to participate in God's plan for heaven on earth. Our priorities matter a great deal to God, and so do our politics.

Jesus began His illustration with this assertion, "Ask, and you will receive. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you." There's a lot to unpack in this statement of fact. And much has been made of His claim, often out of context.

Sadly, our current administration is moving our nation further away from our roots as a people who recognize that God expects us to prioritize care for the most vulnerable and welcome strangers. Our policies now resemble the self-serving cruelty of those nations that we have historically opposed.

Fortunately, most of us see through the lies and manipulation of news sources. And millions are showing up to voice their opposition. Most of all, dire circumstances call for prayers of asking, seeking, and knocking.

For everyone who asks will receive, and anyone who seeks will find, and the door will be opened to those who knock (Matthew 7:8). The Lord provides that which we need, helps us to find a way forward when we're lost, and hears us cry out when we're hurting.

You can join us each Sunday in person or online by clicking the button on our *website's* homepage. *Click here to watch*. This button takes you to our *YouTube channel*. You can find more information about us on our website at *FlintAsburyChurch.org*.

This is a reminder that we publish a weekly newsletter called the Circuit Rider. You can request this publication by email by sending a request to *FlintAsburyUMC@gmail.com*, or let us know when you send a message through our *website*. We post an archive of past editions on our website under Connect - choose *Newsletters*.

**Pastor Tommy** 

Our series was inspired by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, LeAnn Thieman.

Chicken Soup for the Soul:

Answered Prayers: 101

Stories of Hope, Miracles,
Faith, Divine Intervention,
and the Power of Prayer.

Cos Cob, CT: Chicken Soup for the Soul, 2011.

THE SOUTH FLINT SOUP KITCHEN PRESENTS

# THE SFSK ANGEL CLOSET

Shop for new and gently used clothing and household goods!

OPEN MONDAY
THROUGH FRIDAY,
FROM 11AM UNTIL
12PM UNTIL FURTHER
NOTICE
CALL (810) 239-3427 FOR
MORE INFORMATION

We believe that everyone has a right to shop with dignity and have access to quality clothing regardless of their circumstances in life.

South Flint Soup Kitchen 3410 Fenton Road Flint, MI 48507









community rewards



Where shopping and giving come together and you can help!

#### Learn more at

KrogerCommunityRewards.com Or, call Kroger Customer Communications at

1-800-KROGERS, (576-4377) **OPTION #3** 





**Kroger Community Rewards is open to** organizations that are tax exempt under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Participants include school groups,

South Flin

churches and synagogues, youth sports, food banks, animal support groups and many others. Kroger does not make donations to individuals.

Get your favorite local organization

today! Enrollment applications can be downloaded at Kroger.com

Add the South Flint Soup Kitchen to your **Kroger Rewards Card** and Help Feed Flint

## We're giving \$2 million

to local area non profits

Use your Kroger Plus Card and earn rewards for your favorite organization.

Where shopping and giving come together and you can help!









### AND

EAT UP!!

Healthy food to fuel your summer... FREE!

Served at: Asbury UMC 1653 Davison Rd Flint

When: Summer 2025

Meals: Breakfast 9:30am—10:30am

Lunch 12Noon~1:00pm

Days meals are served: Monday—Friday

For more information: Asbury UMC/CDC Offices

(810) 235~0016



SATURDAY 16 AUG 11AM-1PM

BURGERS, DOGS, & DRINKS PROVIDED
BRING A SIDE OR DESSERT TO SHARE
BRING CRAYONS, SHARPIES, &
SHARPENED PENCILS FOR FLINT
FREEDOM SCHOOLS



## @HOPE UMC

4467 BEECHER RD., FLINT