

LIFELINES

Six Words of Rescue for Those
Who Are Struggling

WEEKLY STUDY



WEEK TWO

Pastor Jacob's new series is based on the beautiful and challenging letter to the Philippians. Each week we will be offered a "lifeline" that God intends to lift us up by. This week Jacob takes the opportunity to point out lifelines that God is offering us in the wilderness of our time. God is leading us into the promised land, we can't go backwards. Hold on to the lifelines that He gives to get us where He leads us. If you are studying with your Providence Small Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture. Follow the daily prayer prompt and then prayer this prayer together:

God, You know our hearts and you know our weakness. When we are in a season of stress, we can fall into traps that keep our focus on ourselves instead of you. Forgive us God. We reach for the lifelines you offer to us to be lifted up to a beautiful life in Christ. We reach for Jesus. Amen.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: NUMBERS 11.4-6

⁴ The rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, "If only we had meat to eat!" ⁵ We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. ⁶ But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!"

- The Israelites had been wandering around in the wilderness depending on God for daily bread, but tiring of manna (literally--*what is it?*). Forgetting the horrors of life under Pharaohs rule, they craved what was good about Egypt. Have you grown tired of the adjustments you've had to make during the pandemic? What things do you find yourself or those around you longing for from the past?
- *Pray to retain a heart of gratitude for all that God has provided for you even in difficult times. Pray that the daily bread you receive would remain miraculous to your heart.*

TUESDAY: LUKE 17.32-33

³² Remember Lot's wife! ³³ Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it.

- Lot's wife had been fleeing from a past that was literally burning down (Genesis 19). She was heading towards a new life--to safety, but she turned back to preserve even one more memory of the life she was leaving...and lost her life. What are the things that cause you to want to turn back? Can you think of a time when your life was preserved by giving it up?
- *Pray for forward vision that keeps you focused on God's future.*

WEDNESDAY: JOB 29.1-7

*"How I long for the months gone by,
for the days when God watched over me,
³ when his lamp shone on my head
and by his light I walked through darkness!
⁴ Oh, for the days when I was in my prime,
when God's intimate friendship blessed my house,
⁵ when the Almighty was still with me
and my children were around me,
⁶ when my path was drenched with cream
and the rock poured out for me streams of olive oil.
⁷ "When I went to the gate of the city
and took my seat in the public square*

- Job lost every aspect of his really good life. Naturally he began to long for those lost things, and in these verses he is reminiscing about days. He used to feel close to God. He used to have a family. He used to have a seat in the public square. Have you ever cried such words in your heart that long for the past? Have you ever found yourself stuck in this kind of thinking?
- *Pray for an appreciation of what you have had and lost, and look forward to what God's restoration can look like.*

THURSDAY: 1 KINGS 13.16-17

¹⁶ *The man of God said, "I cannot turn back and go with you, nor can I eat bread or drink water with you in this place. ¹⁷ I have been told by the word of the LORD: 'You must not eat bread or drink water there or return by the way you came.'"*

- A prophet had been given very specific instructions from God. If you read the rest of the story, you'll find that he accepted an invitation that went against these instructions. He ate bread and drank water, but things didn't go so well after that. Sometimes God's instructions seem clearer than other times. When has God seemed to be asking you not to turn back? How did you respond and what was the result?
- *Pray for guidance from God to know the way that leads to life, and the strength to follow Him.*

FRIDAY: PHILIPPIANS 3.13-14

¹² *Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

- Paul had much in his past to run away from. He had good reason to go forward instead of backwards. Yet going back to his former status could have kept him out of the trouble he found

himself in. Where do you find encouragement to press on to take hold of what Jesus is holding out for you?

- *Pray for voices of encouragement that will speak into your life. Pray that you might be that voice for someone else.*

SATURDAY: LUKE 22.17-18

¹⁷ After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. ¹⁸ For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

- Jesus is having one last meal with his disciples, whom he had had many meals with before. IT could be a moment to hold on to. But Jesus commits to move forward and fills his disciples with hope in a time when he will eat and drink with them again. Have you ever experienced one of these last meal moments? Maybe the last day on a job, or last gathering with friends before moving away? The hope of a future gathering can really help. How do you imagine it will feel to eat and drink with Jesus in the Kingdom of God?
 - *Pray for moments of communion with God in Jesus Christ.*
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SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- Pastor Jacob said, "Jesus is our lifeline. Jesus is what will get us through this! Jesus is what will get us through cancer and pandemic and an election and a burnout and brokenness. And Providence Church, we will continue to point people to Jesus over and over again. He is our WayMaker." Where are you looking for Jesus to create a way forward in your life?
- There are lifelines that we have been given as a church during this season. Prayer, online worship, in-person worship, small groups, and serving. Discuss how you see yourself holding on to those lifelines. How can your group or family help you to hold on tight?