

Sermon Series: **A Prayer-FULL Life**  
Sermon Title: "Potter's Wheel Prayer"  
Speaker: **T. C. Moore**  
Scripture: **Jeremiah 18.1-6**



January 24th, 2015

Good morning. For the last several weeks, we've been in a sermon series called [Slide 1] "**A Prayer-FULL Life**." So we've kicked off the new year with some foundational and vital teaching on prayer. Pastor Kevin started us off by teaching on the role of prayer in bringing about **revival**, not only in our own lives, but also in our community, in our city, and throughout the world. No revival movement in the history of the church started without prayer being the **catalyst**. From Pentecost to the Pentecostal Movement (birthed right here in L.A.) prayer has been the spark that set these movements ablaze.

Then, two weeks ago, Pastor Kevin addressed the age-old question "Does prayer only change us, or does prayer move the heart of God?" And I was so encouraged by his answer in that message. The Bible **unequivocally** teaches that prayer **moves the heart of God**. God created the world in such a way as to **share power** with the creatures God has created. The Bible says we are God's **co-workers!** There is **synergy** between God and humanity. Part of the future **hangs in the balance** on whether **we pray!** That's what the Bible actually teaches!

Then, last week, Pastor Kevin talked about the power of "practicing the presence of God" in our everyday life. This is when we wake up to the reality that God is with us wherever we are, doing whatever we're doing, and we engage with God throughout the day. We're reminded of God's presence; we're reminded of God's unconditional love; and we're open and receptive to how God may be leading us and guiding us throughout the day.

*This is a really good sermon series!*

So, this week, I'm going to share a little about the journey I've been on when it comes to prayer, in the hope that in hearing about my journey God will lead you to take the next step in your own journey with prayer. Then I'm going to do a bit of teaching around prayer that I believe you will be able to easily begin practicing in your life.

I've shared some of my story here before. I began following Jesus as his disciple when I was sixteen, almost seventeen, through a powerful encounter with the Holy Spirit at a Pentecostal church in Central Illinois. You could say God threw me in the deep-end right off the bat. And I drove down deep.

That first year of following Jesus was simultaneously a year of **seismic shifts** in the way I was living my life (shifts that were **scary** and **disorienting**) while it was also a year in which I felt like God was **carrying me in the palm of his hand**. I felt like a newborn baby swaddled in the warmth of the Holy Spirit like a blanket. I spent hours and hours and hours at the church praying. And I learned how to pray from Pentecostals. So, this wasn't quiet, contemplative prayer; this was loud, passionate, shouting kind of prayer. I was often moved to tears in prayer—which was a huge shift from the emotional numbness I'd developed in my life before I met Jesus.

I went on prayer retreats with the college ministry of my home church, and I took some of the late-night/early-morning shifts in our 24-hour prayer chains. (That's when a group of us would pray in one-hour shifts for 24 hours straight.) And, each week, I'd

attended the Wednesday night prayer meeting in the church sanctuary. There'd be someone playing music, there'd be people walking around, shouting, speaking in tongues, crying out to God, praying for requests submitted to the church. We cried out to God and interceded on behalf of people who were far from God, people who were sick, mourning, really anyone and everyone.

And it was during this time I was introduced to an album called "Enter the Worship Circle" by two groups: 100 Portraits and Water Deep. [Slide 2] I fell in love with that album and I must have prayed to that music for a 1000 hours that first year. And, to this day, I still love that album.

I share all this to describe what I call my **default "prayer-style"**. [Slide 3] What I'm calling my "prayer-style" is the way I was **taught and conditioned** to pray. It's my "**default setting**" so to speak. It's what comes **naturally** to me, and how I feel **most comfortable** praying.

Everyone who has learned to pray and who prays has what I'm calling a "prayer-style." We all have a pattern and a posture that we're accustomed to assuming in prayer. [Slide 4] For me, my default prayer-style was to use prayer as a **tool**, even a **weapon** of spiritual warfare. Prayer is something that I **utilize**, something that I will to do **when and how I choose!**

But, as I've journeyed along with Jesus, I've sensed God calling me into a new prayer-style. This style views prayer less as a **tool** and more as a **potter's wheel**—a space in which I am being **formed by God**. [Slide 5] And I think there may be some here today, or listening later on the web, who God may also be calling into a new prayer-style. And that is what I've entitled this message "**Potter's Wheel Prayer.**" [Slide 6]

Now, I don't want anyone to misunderstand me, or hear what I'm not saying. I **still intercede** for the lost and pray for God to heal people. I still petition God and I still believe God's heart is moved by prayer! In fact, that is still my default prayer-style. I believe petition and intercession are a vital part of a "Prayer-FULL" life.

My message this morning is an encouragement to those, like me, who may be now sensing a call to add to our prayer life **formative prayer**.

So, in just a moment, I'd like us to read a passage from the book of Jeremiah, the Hebrew prophet. But before we do that, would you please join me in a word of prayer?

**Prayer:** [Slide 7]

*Eternal God, your Spirit inspired those who wrote the Bible and enlightens us to hear your Word afresh each time we read it, as we read it in faith. Help us to hear your Word today and always place our trust in you. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, In Jesus's name we pray. And everyone who agrees said, Amen*

We're going to look at a famous passage from the book of the prophet Jeremiah, who lived hundreds of years before the time of Jesus. Yet the words in this inspired text nourished and inspired Jesus's faith and has continued to nourish and inspire the faith of Jesus's disciples ever since. So let's look at Jeremiah chapter 18, verses 1 through 6: [Slide 8]

***1 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: 2 “Go down to the potter’s house, and there I will give you my message.” 3 So I went down to the potter’s house, and I saw him working at the wheel. 4 But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him. 5 Then the word of the Lord came to me.***

***6 He said, “Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does?” declares the Lord. “Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel.”***

So, the Hebrew prophet Jeremiah has cultivated a relationship with God’s Spirit and Jeremiah’s calling or vocation is as a prophet. God uses Jeremiah to deliver messages to God’s people, Israel. In this story, God has an **object lesson** for Jeremiah, to illustrate God’s message to Israel. God leads Jeremiah to the potter’s shop and directs him to observe what’s going on. And what’s going on is, the potter is **molding, forming** a pot, a vessel, from an unformed lump of clay. But, this lump of clay is **unwieldy**. Maybe it’s a little **stiff, or hardened**. So, it becomes “**marred**” in the potter’s hand. This means it is **malformed**; it doesn’t come out the way the potter **intended**. So, the potter decides to form it in another way—into another form. That’s when God’s Spirit whispers to Jeremiah, “**Do you see what I’m getting at? I’m the Potter; my people are the clay. I want to form my people. I get to decide how you’ll be formed and the purpose for which I’m forming you.**”

As mostly-Gentile Christian believers, the New Testament teaches us that we have been **ingrafted** into the people of God by faith in Israel’s Messiah, Jesus. That’s a different metaphor—one that is about a shoot of one plant being inserted into the trunk of another plant and become organically fused to it so that it now grows as one. This means that Jesus has made a way for you and me, who are not ethnically Hebrew or Israelite to share in the inheritance of God’s people through faith in Israel’s Messiah. This is what Paul teaches in the letter to the Romans, chapters nine through eleven. There, Paul harkens back to this metaphor that God gave Jeremiah and says to the Roman Christians “If God wants to mold and shape his people into a Jew-and-Gentile church, who’s going to tell him he’s wrong?!” “God is the Potter; we are the clay. God will make of us what God chooses. And God has sovereignly chose to include the Gentiles into the people of God. Because that was God’s plan all along. God told Abraham that through his Seed God would bless all the ethnic groups of the world.”

So, that means this image of God molding and forming God’s people now includes you and me! **We, the church, are being formed by God, and prayer is one of the primary ways, if not *the* primary way, God is forming us. Prayer is a formative process.** So, my goal this morning is to suggest a prayer-style that may be new to some of you and may be old-hat to others. If it’s old-hat to you, Praise God! Maybe God is wanting to **breath new life** into it for you—to **rejuvenate** your life of prayer. If this prayer-style is new to you, I believe God may want to **stretch you** as he has been stretching me, to call you and me out of our **comfort zone**, out of our default mode of prayer into a **new way of engaging with him**—a way I’m calling “**Potter’s Wheel Prayer.**”

So, what is “**Potter's Wheel Prayer**”? To describe what Potter's Wheel Prayer is, I'd like to introduce you to a Christian leader who has been influential on my thinking about prayer. Last week, Pastor Kevin mentioned how Brother Lawrence and pastor Greg Boyd have been influential on his thinking about “practicing the presence of God”. They've influenced me a great deal as well! Another influential leader for me as been pastor **Brian Zahnd** who pastors a church outside Kansas City called Word of Life. **[Slide 9]** In his new book *Water to Wine*, pastor Zahnd describes what I'm here calling “Potter's Wheel Prayer” in a chapter entitled “Jerusalem Bells.”

In this chapter, he tells the story of how he often leads a group of pilgrims to the Holy Land and he reflects on his feeling toward the Islamic call to prayer that sounds five times a day in many cities of the Middle East. He confesses that at first, he was annoyed by this interruption that begins at **5 in the morning!** But, soon he grew envious. He wished Christians took prayer as seriously as many Muslims and were as faithful to it, to even pray 5 times a day at set times. Then, one day, as he and his group were traveling in Jerusalem, he heard the bells of the Catholic churches, the Lutheran churches, the Anglican churches all sounding at the same time, and the penny dropped in the slot! *The church bell is the Christian call to prayer!*

Throughout the history of the church, Christians have prayed at set times of the day, and they have prayed prayers that were handed down to them through tradition. So, he started a simple practice of prayer while he was traveling in the Middle East. Whenever he would hear the Muslim call to prayer, or the church bells, he and his group would stop and pray the “Our Father” prayer Jesus taught his disciples to pray. This simple practice began pastor Zahnd down the path of recovering a form of Christian prayer that I'm calling “Potter's Wheel Prayer.” So, here's a brief description and I'll give more precise details in just a moment: *What I'm calling “Potter's Wheel Prayer” is a practice of prayer that is **formative**, we do not **wield it like a hammer**, we do not get to **willfully choose** when and where it is done. Instead we **submit to it**; we **sit under it** in a **posture of humility** as God **forms** us.*

Now, before I go on, I want to address the seventeen year old T. C. in my head who would have adamantly objected to this prayer-style. I can hear him saying, “**Praying prayers passed down through tradition means praying prayers written by someone else. That sounds inauthentic! I want to pray my own prayers!** **[Slide 10]** Maybe you have an objection like that too. Maybe you're asking, “Isn't praying prayers someone else wrote ‘inauthentic’?” Well, I would say to my seventeen year old self the same thing I'd say to you. That's certainly a legitimate concern. I'm definitely not advocating that a person thoughtlessly pray a prayer as some sort of religious **ritual**, as if it were a **good luck charm** or an **incantation**. There's no **magic** in praying certain words over others. However, I would quickly add this. Certain prayers **are** inherently **better** than others because they are **well-crafted, theologically-sound**, and **time-tested**. Some prayers are better crafted than others. Some prayers are more theologically-sound than others. And some prayers have stood the test of time—being prayed for centuries by faithful Christians around the world whose faith has been nurtured and inspired by them. That's not insignificant. And, I can tell you from experience, that I have often sensed **increased, not decreased**, authenticity when I have given voice to the cries of my heart using the words of faithful saints that have gone before me. So, no, I don't think praying prayers passed down in tradition is inauthentic.

**[Slide 11]** But, I also hear my seventeen year old self objecting, “But what about Jesus’s warning not to pray ‘**vain repetitions**’?” Maybe you’ve heard that objection too. Well, again, I would definitely not prescribe prayer as ‘vain repetitions.’ As Jesus rightly teaches, we are not heard by God because of our many words. In other words, prayer is never a **scale** we’re trying to fill up with words, to earn favor with God or to twist God’s arm. Jesus says that is how pagans think of prayer.

Recently, Cindy Lee has been teaching in our Leadership Development cohort, and she did a fantastic job. She’s taught the cohort on this type of formative prayer, so I asked her about this objection and I loved what she told me in response. She said, in many religion practices the goal of praying repetitively is to reach a state of consciousness where the self virtually evaporates, where one reaches a state of “enlightenment.” But that is never the goal of Christian prayer. Instead, when Christians pray repetitively, it’s in an effort to **center our hearts and minds on the only worthy subject: the God revealed in Jesus; the God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.** So, it’s not the repetition that is hazardous; it’s the **goal** toward which the repetition is **aiming**. I would never recommend you repeat a prayer **thoughtlessly** or **mechanistically** in order to take your mind **off of God**. No! That would definitely be a “vain” way to pray. The “Potter’s Wheel Prayer” I’m recommending is designed to turn our hearts and minds toward God in a renewed sense of *devotion, allegiance, submission, and obedience*. I’m advocating for a prayer-style in which we are being formed more and more into the image of Christ!

In the “Jerusalem Bells” chapter of *Water to Wine*, Brian Zahnd says several things I think are powerfully true. Here’s one of them, **[Slide 12]**

“...if prayer is spiritual formation and not God-management, then we cannot depend on our self to pray properly. If we trust our self to pray, we just end up recycling our own issues—mostly anger and anxiety—without experiencing any transformation. We pray in circles. We pray and stay put. We pray prayers that begin and end in our own little self. **When it comes to spiritual formation, we are what we pray. Without wise input that comes from outside ourselves, we will never change.** We will just keep praying what we already are. A selfish person prays selfish prayers. An angry person prays angry prayers. A greedy person prays greedy prayers. A manipulative person prays manipulative prayers. Nothing changes. We make no progress. But it’s worse than that. Not only do we not make progress, we actually harden our heart. To consistently pray in a wrong way reinforces a wrong spiritual formation.”<sup>1</sup>

Just like we teach a lot here at New City: We need God’s grace to be transformed. We cannot transform ourselves through sheer will-power. “Potter’s Wheel Prayer” is placing ourselves in a posture to be formed by God’s grace. It’s an acknowledgement and a recognition that we cannot form ourselves—we need God to form us. God supplies his grace to us in the form of well-crafted and theologically-sound prayers that have stood the test of time.

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<sup>1</sup> Brian Zahnd, *Water to Wine: Some of My Story* (Spello Press, 2016), p.75.

**[Slide 13]** So, here's a more detailed definition of what I'm calling "Potter's Wheel Prayer." It's a practice of prayer that is: 1) **Scheduled in a regular rhythm**; 2) **Structured by the wise input of those who have gone before us in the faith**; 3) **Submitted to as a discipline of spiritual formation**. That's what I mean by "Potter's Wheel Prayer."

So, what I want to do with the remainder of this message, is describe three ways "Potter's Wheel Prayer" forms us and then I want to equip you with some suggestions and resources so that, should you can begin to practice this prayer-style yourself, and you won't have to start from scratch. Part of my role as a pastor is to **equip** you (Ephesians 4 says) so that you have what you need to be properly formed as disciples of Jesus, and prayer is an **indispensable** part of our spiritual formation.

**[Slide 14]** So, the first way "Potter's Wheel Prayer" forms us is by forming our **Vocabulary**. This is the beginning of all growth and development. Think about how an infant starts out discovering the world. He or she starts with word association. 'Oh, this big moving thing who wipes my bottom and feeds me is 'ma ma' or 'da da'.' 'Oh, this smaller moving thing that licks my face is 'doggy'.' (When my kids were infants and toddlers, they somehow developed the habit of calling their pacifiers "Gully Ga". We have no idea why. We don't know where that name came from. But we just went with it. So we'd be like, "You want your gully ga?")

A great example of the way our vocabulary can be formed is **praying the Psalms**. Again, in *Water to Wine*, Brian Zahnd writes, **[Slide 15]**

"When we pray the Psalms we are continuing a three-thousand-year-old tradition—a tradition practiced by Jesus and the Apostles. **We pray the Psalms, not to express what we feel, but to learn to feel what they express. In praying the Psalms we learn to experience the whole range of human emotion in a way that is healthy and healing.** Praying the Psalms may be among the most effective exercises available to us for preserving mental and emotional health."<sup>2</sup>

One of the best things I ever learned from the Pentecostal pastors who disciplined me when I was sixteen years old was learning to pray the Psalms! It has been one of the most formative practices of my Christian life.

**[Slide 16]** One of my favorite theologians, N. T. Wright has a new book out on the Psalms called *The Case for the Psalms: Why They are Essential*. He is one of the world's most prolific and renowned theologians in the world, and he's recently devoted an entire book to a case for why the Psalms are essential!

This is precisely what we see in the Early Church. In the book of Acts, when Peter and John were released from jail, the believers began to pray spontaneously and passionately and what came out was largely from the Psalms. Acts 4: **[Slide 17]**

**[...] they raised their voices together in prayer to God. 'Sovereign Lord,' they said, 'you made the heaven and the earth and the sea,**

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<sup>2</sup> Zahnd, *Water to Wine*, p.79.

***and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:  
'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?  
The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One' [...]***

That's a direct quotation of **Psalms 2**! Which means the spontaneous and passionate prayers of the early church were formed by the **liturgical songbook of Israel: the Psalms**. So that, when they give language to their hearts' cries, the very **vocabulary** they use is formed by the Psalms. The fact is, for the entire history of the Christian church, Jesus's disciples have been formed by praying the Psalms.

**[Slide 18]** On Tuesday, Osheta and I were at Vroman's Bookstore in Pasadena and I saw that Tim Keller has a new book out called *Songs of Jesus: A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms*. This is a great example of a **scheduled** and **structured** guide to praying the Psalms. If a person were to submit to such a scheduled and structured practice of prayer, there is no doubt their **vocabulary** would be formed by God.

And when we have the grammar of prayer down pat, because we've **soaked in the Psalms** and we've been **saturated by the Psalms**—that's when our spontaneous and extemporaneous prayers becoming **power-packed with Spirit-inspired vocabulary!**

**[Slide 19]** So the first way "Potter's Wheel Prayer" forms us is by forming our **Vocabulary**. A second way "Potter's Wheel Prayer" forms us is by forming our **Imagination**. Once we have the vocabulary of prayer, we begin to form conceptions of God, ourselves, and others.

"Potter's Wheel Prayer" is a posture in which we allow the metaphors and imagery of Scripture to shape our conceptions and imagination. God is a **fortress**, a **strong tower**. God **hides me in the shadow of his wings**. God is a **kinsman redeemer**. God is my **advocate** who **intercedes** on my behalf. God is a **friend who sticks closer than a brother**. God is the **righteous Judge** who defends the defenseless and will bring justice by **making right** everything that has **gone wrong**. God is a **Father** who runs to his **lost son** who returns home and invites into the party his **disgruntled son** who resents his grace. God is supremely and definitively revealed in the **Lamb Who Was Slain**.

Changing our conceptions through a practice of **scheduled, structured, and submitted to** prayer is absolutely **life-changing**. We begin to see God in a new light and we begin to see ourselves in a new light and we begin to see others in a new light. **The story that we tell about ourselves about ourselves changes—and that changes who we are!**

No longer are we on our own in a spiritual wasteland. No, we are part of the **worldwide** and **historic** Body of Christ. We are **adopted children of God**. We are part of a **multiethnic multicultural tribe** from **every** language group and **ethnic group** in the world! We are part of the **new humanity** Jesus is creating right now. We are being **transformed** into the image of Christ. We are a **glimpse** and **foretaste** of that **New City** that we will one day fully be.

You and I don't experience ourselves as a list of attributes or a resume. We experience ourselves as a part of a story we're constantly telling ourselves. "Potter's Wheel Prayer" puts our story into its proper context: the story of God redeeming the world. Our stories are now subsumed in God's Story and we see ourselves and God's world differently.

**[Slide 20]** So, "Potter's Wheel Prayer" transforms our lives by first giving us a new **Vocabulary**, then by giving us a new **Imagination**. And the effect of this is the development of new **Character-in-Action**.

This quarter, Osheta and I have joined Delonte and Claire's Grow and Serve group (which I'm really excited about) called "AYF" for "Adults, Youth, and Families." And, together we're reading Dr. Mark Labberton (president of Fuller Seminary)'s new book *The Dangerous Act of Loving Your Neighbor*. In it, Dr. Labberton connects our spiritual formation to the way we engage with the people and cultures around us and how we demonstrate justice in the world. He writes, **[Slide 21]**

*"...in a complicated world of profound injustice, the crisis of the human heart is crucial to social transformation. **Changing our world depends on changing our hearts: how we perceive, name and act in the world.** The ways of the heart are reflected in the world daily in how we perceive (see and assess one another), how we name (frame and position one another) and how act (engage or distance one another)."*<sup>3</sup>

For the world to be transformed, we need to have transformed hearts and minds. We need our vocabulary and our imaginations to be formed by the faith once delivered to God's holy people. Then our **Character-in-Action** will be transformed. Our perceptions are formed in prayer; which leads to how we will name ourselves and others; which leads to how we will demonstrate Christ's love to one another—including our neighbors.

Demonstrating Christ's love is how all people will know you and I are Jesus's disciples. And we will only put on display that Christ-like love if we are being formed into the image of Christ. The Apostle Paul said it this way: **[Slide 22]**

***<sup>1</sup> Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will.***

The only way you and I are going to be able to withstand being conformed to the insidious and seductive system of the world that surrounds us everyday is by having our hearts and minds **renewed**. And one of the primary ways God renews our hearts and minds is through **formative prayer**.

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<sup>3</sup> Mark Labberton, *The Dangerous Act of Loving Your Neighbor: Seeing Others Through the Eyes of Jesus* (IVP, 2010), p.23.



That's why it's vitally important that our perception—our vocabulary and imagination is formed by **well-crafted, theologically-sound, and time-tested prayers**. **It's vital that we're not being formed by the echo chamber of own anger and anxiety. It's vital that we are being formed by God's wisdom from on high.**

Over the last several years, I have been developing a practice of "Potter's Wheel Prayer." I haven't arrived; I'm still learning. But I've been drawn by God's Spirit to several books of *scheduled, structured* prayer. One of the all-time best is the **Book of Common Prayer**. [Slide 23] The other day when Osheta and I were at that bookstore, I saw that there is now a 350th Anniversary edition. That means, for three and half centuries, Christians around the world, from Indonesia to Iceland, have been praying these prayers and have been formed by them. Abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison and William Wilberforce were formed by the Scripture-soaked Book of Common Prayer. Revivalists like John Wesley were formed by the Scripture-soaked Book of Common Prayer. And theologians like N. T. Wright have been formed by the Scripture-soaked Book of Common Prayer.

[Slide 24] Early last year, Delonte reminded me of a prayer book that I used to use when I lived in New Orleans, compiled by Shane Claiborne, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, and Enuma Okoro. The prayer book they compiled together is called **Common Prayer**. The subtitle is "A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals." And, they've put a lot of the book online at **CommonPrayer.net**

So, I've done my best to make a case for why we need "Potter's Wheel," formative prayer in our lives—prayer that is **scheduled, structured, and submitted to**. It forms our **vocabulary**, our **imagination**, and our **character-in-action**. And I've point you to several resources to help you start this practice. But before I close with a challenge, I want to echo what Pastor Kevin said last week about living under condemnation when we fail at prayer. [Slide 25] **No beating ourselves up!** (Let's all agree to this!) Prayer is **too important** for us to let **perfectionism** prevent us from praying at all! Remember what Pastor Kevin's spiritual director told him, "*Any [spiritual discipline] worth doing, is worth doing poorly!*" "There is now no longer any condemnation for those who are in the Messiah Jesus." We have been set free from shame and guilt to live in the freedom of God's grace. So, let us celebrate this grace by pressing in to know God better—to be formed by God! What a great privilege it is to be the people God is forming for himself.

Now, here's my challenge: [Slide 26] The Christian season of Lent is coming up in a few short weeks. It starts on Wednesday, February 10th. That's Ash Wednesday. (We'll have more information about our Ash Wednesday services in the next few weeks). But, starting on Ash Wednesday, the Christian church enters into a 40-day season of **contemplative and prayerful pilgrimage with Jesus toward the Cross** called "Lent", [Slide 27] where we walk in the footsteps of Jesus toward the Cross and we remember what Jesus did for us. Historically, this is a time when Christians fast and pray, in preparation for Holy Week leading up to Easter. This season presents you and I with a perfect opportunity to practice "Potter's Wheel Prayer" and be formed.

My challenge to you is to take advantage of the Lenten season this year. Make it **"40 Days of Formation"**! You can use one of the resources I recommended earlier, or you can pick up a daily morning liturgy of prayer created by Brian Zahnd that will print

out and make available at the Information Table in the lobby. This Lenten season, allow God to form your vocabulary, your imagination, and your character-in-action through scheduled, structured, and submitted to prayer—prayers that are well-crafted, theologically-sound, and time-tested.

### **Closing Prayer:**

And here's how I'd like to close this message. I'd like to invite you to stand with me and for us to pray together the most formative prayer I know. A prayer that was crafted by Jesus himself and passed down in Christian tradition. This prayer has been forming the vocabulary, imagination, and character-in-action of Jesus's disciples for two thousand years. Some call it the "Lord's Prayer." But since Jesus prays for us in John 17, I prefer to call that prayer the "Lord's Prayer," and I prefer to call this prayer the "Our Father" prayer. **[Slide 28]** Let's pray the "Our Father" prayer together:

***Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed by your name.  
Your Kingdom come,  
Your will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.  
For yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever.  
Amen***

### **Benediction:**

***And now,  
May the God of Peace,  
Who raised up the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead,  
Through the everlasting covenant in his blood,  
Make you complete in every good work to do his will.  
Working in you what is pleasing in his sight, like a Potter molding clay.  
So that we are being increasingly formed into the glorious image of Christ.  
Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
One God, now and forever,  
Amen.***