



## 40 Days of Spiritual Preparation

As we begin this week of Lenten Devotionals we are focusing on the awakening and renewal of the church Jesus died for here at New Horizons [NHCC]. To be drawn into the very heart of renewal you may want to record your honest responses to the reflective questions. Throughout the week listening to "Build Your Kingdom Here" by Rend Collective on YouTube.

### March 24th:

Whose church is NHCC? Read slowly Colossians 1: 17 – 20 and Ephesians 1:22 – 23.

Reflective questions: How many references can you find that the church belongs to us? How often do you say "This is my church?" Could this be both correct and incorrect? What mental and emotional changes could occur in our lives if we deeply acknowledged that the Lord Jesus Christ is the head of His church?

Invest some time in worshiping the Lord of the Church.

### March 25th:

What is God's plan for us in His church? Read Romans 12:5 slowly several times. Then read again Ephesians 1: 22 – 23 from yesterday's reading.

Reflective questions: How are we to relate to Christ? To each other? How significant is my role in His church? What is the impact of my full participation (or lack thereof) in the body life of His church?

Prayerfully ask Jesus to reveal the strength of your commitment to Him and to your brothers and sisters in the church body.

### March 26th:

Who is responsible for the growth of His church? Reflectively read Ephesians 3:20 – 21 and Matthew 16:16 – 19 several times or read from other translations if you have them available.

Reflective questions: How does Jesus, the Lord of His church, envision her expansion and growth? Is this expansive growth dependent upon His power alone? On our involvement (our plans and programs) alone? Who or what assures this growth? What are some of the hinderances to the growth of NHCC? (Look both within yourself and in our church body as you answer).

In prayer ask: "What is one thing I can do to cooperate with God's Spirit in Christ's church here at New Horizons?" Take a step of obedience today in what God reveals in answer to your prayer.

### March 27th:

What would an awakened Christ exalting church look like?

We look at two characteristics today:

Listens to the Spirit – Read Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 28; 3:6, 13, 22.

Loves Jesus and others with a first (vibrant, passionate) love – Read Revelation 2:4-5

Reflective questions: Do you have these characteristics? How often have you invested prayer time in listening to Jesus speaking to you? How could you increase your listening time?

Do you remember your love for Jesus, His church and your friends when you first became a Christ follower? Do you need to repent of lost love? What are the consequences for you and the church if you do not experience passionate love for Christ's church?

In prayer ask God to help us (His Church) to listen to the Spirit speaking and directing His Church. Then ask Jesus for a fresh passionate love for His Church.



**March 22nd:**

What would an awakened Christ exalting church look like?

We look at two more characteristics today:

Is awake to open doors of ministry – Read Revelation 3: 8

Is hot with passion for ministry – Read Revelation 3:15 -16

Reflective questions: Do you and Christ's church here New Horizons have these characteristics? What open doors is Jesus giving us in 2020? Where does our courage and strength come from to walk through these open doors? Will this take us out of our comfort zone? What ministry is God calling you to serve with passion? Are you willing to obey?

Prayerfully ask God to individually and collectively to awaken to new doors of ministry and to have an inextinguishable, unquenchable, burning desire to serve Jesus through His church.

**March 23rd:**

Realize the source of opposition to NHCC expansion. Read Revelation 2: 9 – 10; 13 – 14; 20; 3: 9 and Ephesians 5: 12

Reflective questions: Where does the greatest opposition to Christ's church come from? Why? Why does Satan use people with critical spirits within the body to discourage local churches? Are people our enemies? Where do factions and divisions come from? Who holds the answer to the question: "Will NHCC thrive?"

**March 24th:**

Realize that Jesus is knocking at the door of NHCC! Read Revelation 3:20 – 22

Often these verses are used as an invitation to receive Jesus. However, these verses were written to the church! Our Lord, who gave His life for His church, is pictured here on the outside of His church. How sad!

Reflective question: How can we be sure that the living Christ is on the inside (at the very heart) of His Church here at New Horizons?

Let's as individuals and a church earnestly repent and confess any ways we have excluded Jesus from leadership of His church here New Horizons.

**Action steps:**

1. Take time in united prayer with your community group, or with a few others for Christ's church here in Jackson.
2. Go to a brother or sister with whom you have disagreed, hurt, spoken against, not spoken with, or have been hurt by and ask for humbly ask for forgiveness and reconciliation.
3. Ask God to help you identify one friend who is not a Christ follower, pray earnestly for this person, build a bridge of friendship, then share your love with this person, your love for Jesus and your church.
4. Step out of your comfort zone and generously give of your time and talent to serve joyfully in one ministry of NHCC.
- 5: **Grab an Easter invite card and pray about who you might invite to attend Easter service at NHCC with you.**

As we listen to the Lord of the Church here is what is promised:

"God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us.

Glory to God in the church!

Glory to God in the Messiah, in Jesus!

Glory down all the generations!

Glory through all millennia! Oh, yes!"

Ephesians 3:20 – 21 MSG