

## **Taking the Initiative Against Despair**

By Oswald Chambers

*Rise, let us be going.* —Matthew 26:46

In the Garden of Gethsemane, the disciples went to sleep when they should have stayed awake, and once they realized what they had done it produced despair. The sense of having done something irreversible tends to make us despair. We say, “Well, it’s all over and ruined now; what’s the point in trying anymore.” If we think this kind of despair is an exception, we are mistaken. It is a very ordinary human experience. Whenever we realize we have not taken advantage of a magnificent opportunity, we are apt to sink into despair. But Jesus comes and lovingly says to us, in essence, “Sleep on now. That opportunity is lost forever and you can’t change that. But get up, and let’s go on to the next thing.” In other words, let the past sleep, but let it sleep in the sweet embrace of Christ, and let us go on into the invincible future with Him.

There will be experiences like this in each of our lives. We will have times of despair caused by real events in our lives, and we will be unable to lift ourselves out of them. The disciples, in this instance, had done a downright unthinkable thing— they had gone to sleep instead of watching with Jesus. But our Lord came to them taking the spiritual initiative against their despair and said, in effect, “Get up, and do the next thing.” If we are inspired by God, what is the next thing? It is to trust Him absolutely and to pray on the basis of His redemption.

Never let the sense of past failure defeat your next step.

### **Authorities we want to remember specifically in prayer this week:**

Secretary of Homeland Security – Alejandro Mayorkas  
Missouri Department of Agriculture – Chris Chinn  
Local Housing Authority Dir. – Diane Burke (City of St. Charles)  
Dianna Clair (St. Charles County)  
Police Chief – Kurt Frisz (St. Charles County)



## **FAITH COVENANT MINISTRIES**

LOVE | LIFE | LORDSHIP | LEADERSHIP

[faithcovenantstl.com](http://faithcovenantstl.com)

### **Purpose Statement:**

We exist to glorify God by serving as a conduit for the grace of God whereby faith the Love, Life, Lordship and Leadership of the Kingdom of Heaven is revealed and expanded to all nations.

### **Mission Statement:**

We desire to be a multi-cultural, multi-generational conduit of the grace of God to be used to fulfil our purpose, for the glory of God.

### **Mailing address:**

P.O. Box 430  
St. Charles, MO 63302  
636-373-9001

### **Weekly Corporate Gatherings:**

Sunday Worship Service- 10:00 AM  
Discipleship Groups (times vary)

### **Staff:**

Rev. Michael Hammond, Sr. - President & Senior Pastor  
Rose Hammond- Receptionist

Order of Worship  
Sunday, February 18, 2024

## FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

(**Congregation** responses spoken together appear in **bold** print.)

### OPENING DECLARATION & PRAYER

We join our voices to call on the Lord in this hour of worship. We trust in God. We celebrate all the ways God leads us in the ways which are right. Come, let us worship this God of steadfast love and faithfulness!

WORSHIP IN SONG (click the song title for a YouTube track)

[All Hail](#) [Victory Chant](#) [Ancient of Days](#) [He is Exalted](#)

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God, full of mercy and steadfast love, tune our hearts and steady our minds as Your Word is being read. Let us know Your ways. Forgive our brokenness. Set our feet onto Your path of steadfast love and faithfulness. Restore us to wholeness, and to holiness, in this season of Lent. As we pray, we are grateful for Your presence in each of us, and in this place. In Jesus' name we pray and we all agree by saying, **Amen**

SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah 40:1-25 (NASB95)

Leader: This is the Word of God.

**Congregation: Thank you, Lord for your Holy Word.**

(Quiet Reflection)

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 25:1-11 (NASB95)

Leader: This is the Word of God.

**Congregation: Thank you, Lord for your Holy Word.**

(Quiet Reflection)

WORSHIP IN SONG: HYMN OF THE MONTH

[Love Lifted Me](#) | View the lyrics [here](#)

GOSPEL READING: John 1:19-34 (NASB95)

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord

**People: Praise to You Lord Christ**

SERMON: <https://www.facebook.com/fcmstl>

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE

Let us confess our sins together before Almighty God.

(Quiet confession)

(Let us pray.) **Most Merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not obeyed the Greatest Commandment, to love You with our whole heart; and our neighbor as ourselves. We have not been quick to look for You at all times, and to share the Gospel with others. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of Your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in Your will, and walk in Your ways, to the glory of Your Name. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE: (liturgy on screen)

### PASSING OF THE PEACE

The Peace of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be always with you.

**And also, with You**

HOLY EUCHARIST: (liturgy on screen)

Communion Song: [Oh How He Loves You and Me](#)

### THE BLESSING & SENDING

**Sermon Series on The Gospel of John**

18 February 2024

Message 6: The Ministry of John the Baptist –John 1:19-34 (NAS95)

Pastor Michael Hammond Sr.

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TAKEAWAYS:

1. Now is the time to \_\_\_\_\_ and believe the Gospel because Jesus is coming.

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2. You are more \_\_\_\_\_ to God's plan than you realize (v. 23).
  - Too many people fail to take their faith and living a life of holiness and evangelism \_\_\_\_\_ because they see themselves as \_\_\_\_\_ in God's plans.
    - If you and I sincerely believed God holds us accountable for not sharing the Gospel with others, we would live differently.
    - We need to live like people are going to end up in hell if we do not tell them about Jesus.

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3. Do not \_\_\_\_\_ yourself, because your importance comes from \_\_\_\_\_ who has chosen to reveal Himself to you so you can reveal Him to others (vss. 31-34).
  - God has called you to be a \_\_\_\_\_ and witnesses point people to the \_\_\_\_\_, not themselves.

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