

## Candle Reflection & Devotional, Week 1: Feb 22, 2026

### ***Introduction:***

During our Ash Wednesday service we introduced a new-to-us practice that many have done throughout history during this Lenten season. To complement our prayers and sacrifices this season, each Sunday we will recall one of Jesus' final seven statements from the Cross as we extinguish one of these candles.

Unlike Advent where we light a candle each week and it becomes brighter as we approach the birth of Christ, our great light coming into darkness... this practice extinguishes a candle each week as we approach Jesus' death, the last candle going out on Good Friday.

John 1:5 says: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." But on the night Jesus died, it seemed as if the darkness was overcoming all of the goodness and light. The dimming of the light during this season reminds us of the journey leading to the cross. It is a reminder that this season is a time to confess, repent, and be renewed because of what Jesus did for us. It is a season where we come to terms with our need for God's mercy and grace, and the times we have rejected it just as it was rejected so many years ago.

But rest assured, on Easter we will relight all of these candles because we get to celebrate Jesus' resurrection, the light that has won and has not been overcome.

### ***Instructions:***

Each week we will do a candle reflection during service. We will include that practice here for reference or if you want to recreate your own candle practice at home. There is also an at-home devotional piece for you to use to continue this reflection each Sunday.

## **Candle Reflection**

**(done during service, or for you to recreate at home):**

**Reader:** *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."* -Luke 23:34

**Observe a moment of silence.**

**Reader:** As we extinguish this light, we recognize the pain and suffering in the world and our part in creating it. It was our sin that necessitated the cross.

**A candle is extinguished.**

**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, your Son laid down his life for us and taught us the ultimate act of love, which is forgiveness. Even on the cross and in his suffering, his thoughts were focused on others, on us. Each week, we will witness how we slip further into darkness when we fail to love our brothers and sisters as Christ did. Open our hearts to trust in the Lord and his steadfast loving mercy. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.*

**Our Hope:** We find assurance of hope in your Word: *"The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble".* -Psalm 9:9

**Our Response:**

**Reader:** This is the Word of the Lord.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

## ***At-Home Devotional:***

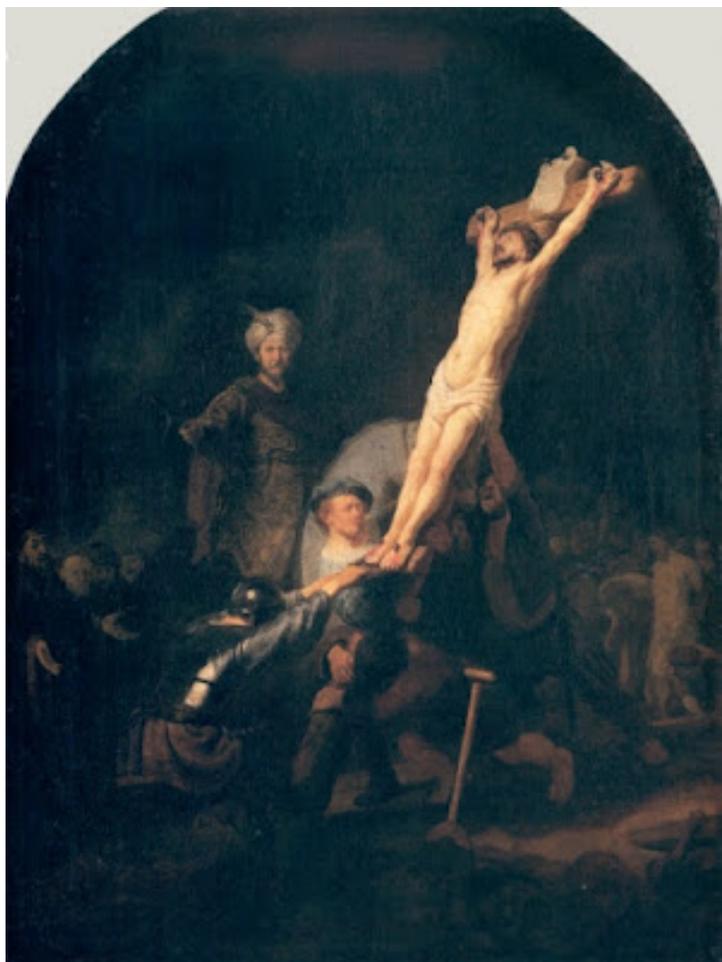
From the cross, Jesus forgives those actively persecuting Him. This kind of grace and forgiveness, this type of love is unheard of, but this is precisely how Jesus loves each one of us, how He extends grace and offers forgiveness to all of us.

### ***Questions to consider:***

Who do you need to forgive?

Who do you need to ask for forgiveness from?

This week, let's remember how quick Jesus is to forgive us- before we even ask, and let us extend that forgiveness to others.



### ***Art to Accompany Your Devotion:***

#### **The Raising of the Cross**

Rembrandt

c. 1633

Oil on canvas

Alte Pinakothek, Munich