

theCHURCH atCLARENDON

Cent.

A SEASON OF RENEWAL

2026



ALREADY VICTORIOUS

ROMANS 8:37

A Welcome from **OUR SENIOR PASTOR**

Welcome to the 2026 Lenten Season.



I am delighted to present to you the fourth edition of our Church's Lenten Devotional. I am awed and truly encouraged by the quality of what Jehovah has allowed us to produce together. Again this year we invite you to consider the truth that we are Already Victorious because of the loving work of Christ at Calvary. (Romans 8:37) While we are living in a season, and through circumstances, that feel unprecedented and, at times, unnecessarily hard, we find hope in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Moreover, we find strength and gain wisdom by drawing closer to God.

I hope you will take these next 40 days to do just that. Disconnect from the feedback loop of despair, disappointment, and dismay offered by the world. And instead, press into the goodness, generosity, and grace that God offers us when we seek God first and live righteously. The fact that we are all reading together will unify us and add to the richness of our experience.

Let me also offer my sincere gratitude and appreciation to each of the writers who contributed to this edition. Your prayerfulness and openness to Holy Spirit are evident through the words you wrote. This year, Minister Abbie Tolbert joined me in the task of editing our Devotional. We already worked well together, and sharing in this process only strengthened our bond. I am indebted to Abbie for her kindness and dependability and inspired by her depth of spiritual maturity and biblical knowledge.

Please share this Devotional widely. Give it to your family, friends, colleagues, neighbors, and even strangers! The Good News is told on these pages. Perhaps more than ever, our world needs to feel the strength of Divine love and be reminded of all that Jesus has done to secure our eternal relationship with God. I hope we all experience Christ's power and find reasons to praise during this Lenten Season. May we be humbled and our hearts renewed as we make this annual journey to the Cross.

Loving and Praying for you,
Rev. Danielle L. Bridgeforth

An Invitation to **Our Lenten Services**

21-Days of Fasting, February 16th - April 3rd

Join us as we fast from 8am-4pm each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday of the seven weeks of Lent.

Each Wednesday, February 18th - April 1st

Mid-Week Prayer Call - Join us for a biblical meditation and corporate prayer. 7-7:20am EST Dial: (605) 313-4162 - Access Code: 701912#

February 18th

Ash Wednesday Service at 7pm (Hybrid)

Holy Week Services

March 29th

Palm Sunday Service at 10:30am (Hybrid)

April 2nd

Maundy Thursday Communion (Outside, Walk-up and Drive-up)
12-1pm and 5:30-6:30pm

April 3rd

Good Friday Service - Jesus' Journey to the Cross at 7pm

April 5th

Son-Rise Service at 7am (In-person only), followed by Breakfast
Worship Service at 10:30am (Hybrid)

Participate in the Flowering of the Cross
6:30am-10:30am on Resurrection Sunday

A Thank You to **OUR WRITERS**

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Daniel Simpkins
Natasha Simpkins
Quella Slaughter
Yalonda Smith
Abbie Tolbert
Steve Watson
Adia White
Lavell White
Denise Williams
Meoshia Wilson

An Introduction to **OUR DEVOTIONAL**



Lent is the 40 days (excluding Sundays) between Ash Wednesday and Resurrection Sunday. It is a time for repentance, renewal, and recommitment as we consecrate ourselves and commemorate the life and sacrifice of our Savior. This Devotional will be a wonderful aid to us as we reflect on the redemptive work of Jesus.

Each day we will be prompted to:

- Read (or listen to) a passage of scripture
- Reflect on the devotional thought
- Respond openly to the question(s) asked, and
- Recite the guided words of prayer from the heart

If you miss a day, give yourself grace and catch up as you are able. Each Sunday, when we worship and fellowship together, will be a rest day.

As you study, be open and yielded to all that Holy Spirit says in this time of prayer, fasting, and devotion. Let us also be praying for and with one another during this Lenten Season. Finally, expect the Lord to meet us as we journey and to make us better.

Week One

Wednesday, February 18 - Saturday, February 21

Humbly Surrendered

Confession → Repentance → Forgiveness



Wednesday,
FEBRUARY 18
Danielle L. Bridgeforth

READ

Luke 23:33-34 (NLT)

FORGIVE ME FATHER,
FOR I HAVE SINNED

REFLECT

Forgiveness is often a hard concept for us humans. This is the case whether we need to forgive ourselves or someone else. Thankfully, Jesus did not have the same struggle. While we are often stingy and tight-fisted when it comes to handing out understanding, reprieve, and grace, Jesus, even from the Cross, generously prayed for the forgiveness of those who would soon crucify Him. He did not limit His forgiveness to understanding – theirs or His – Christ knew there was a need and asked God to fill it. Moreover, Jesus did not wait for those who gathered to mock, ridicule, and kill Him to come to their senses and seek out justice or grace. Instead, Jesus offered His life, and in so doing shows us the heart of God. Oh, that we could be like Christ!

As we journey to the Cross over the next seven weeks, let's keep Christ at the center. Let's allow His perfect example of love, grace, peace, and wisdom to show us the way forward. Don't resist Christ's correction or conviction. Instead, freely admit that you have and do fall short, time and time again. Let this Lenten Season stimulate you to surrender yourself more fully to God, *withholding nothing*. As you move through each day and each week of this Devotional, keep the end in mind. And whenever you feel overwhelmed with sadness or grief, over your own sin and shortcomings, or those of humanity, be reminded that it is for this very reason that Jesus came. God knows our frame and remembers that we are just dust. (Psalm 103:14). Jesus came to help us. Jesus came to call us higher. He calls us still. May we use this time to listen and to obediently respond.

RESPOND

What do you want to achieve or accomplish with Christ during this Lenten Season? Set your intentions now and trust God to meet you.

RECITE

Father, forgive me for I have sinned. Help me to be better and to do better today.
Amen.

Thursday,
FEBRUARY 19

William L. Lake, Jr.

READ

1 John 1:5-10



REFLECT

God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. John's words leave little room for interpretation—just as music leaves little room for error. In an ensemble, a note is either right or wrong. It doesn't matter how confidently it's played or how much the player wishes it to fit; a wrong note simply doesn't belong in the desired harmony.

John reminds us that life with God works the same way.

When we claim to walk in the light while hiding in darkness, the result is dissonance. Things don't line up. Relationships strain. The music of our lives feels unsettled. Yet John does not write to condemn, but to invite. Confession is not punishment—it is tuning. When we admit where we are out of alignment, God does what we cannot do ourselves: He brings us back into harmony.

Walking in the light does not mean perfection. What matters is the willingness to listen, adjust, and respond to the truth. God's light reveals what is off, not to shame us, but to restore us. When we walk honestly before God and one another, fellowship returns, and the music begins to make sense again.

RESPOND

Where might God be revealing a "note" that needs adjustment in your life? What would it look like to practice honesty, instead of hiding?

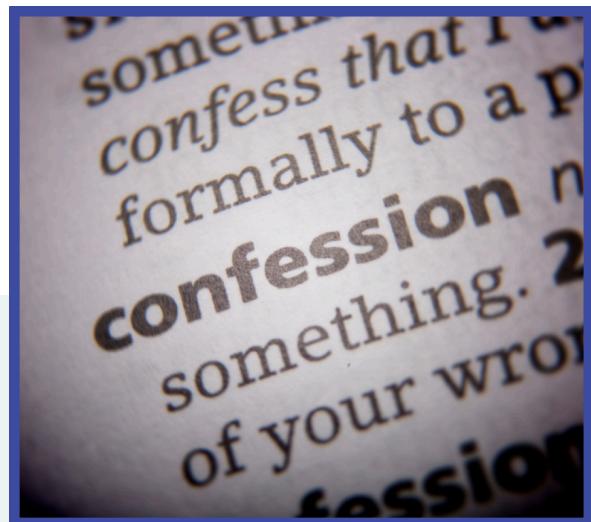
RECITE

God of light, tune our hearts to Your truth and lead us into the harmony of honest and faithful living. Amen.

Friday,
FEBRUARY 20
Chris Gaines

READ

Proverbs 28:13 (The Passion Translation)



REFLECT

This passage challenges me to examine how I respond when I make mistakes or fall short. My natural tendency is often to minimize, justify, or quietly move past my wrongs rather than confront them honestly. This verse reminds me that hiding failure does not lead to peace or growth: instead, it creates distance—within myself, in my relationships, and in my walk with God.

I see that true freedom begins with humility: admitting where I am wrong and taking responsibility without excuses. Just as important, the verse calls me not only to confess but to forsake—to make real changes that reflect repentance, not just regret. This requires courage, self-discipline, and a willingness to be uncomfortable. Yet the promise of the verse is mercy, not condemnation. It reassures me that honesty and change open the door to forgiveness, healing, and renewal. Reflecting on this Proverb encourages me to live with integrity, seek accountability, and trust that owning my failures leads to restoration rather than shame.

In Psalm 51, David confessed his sins and guilt to the Lord. In verse 10, David asks God, "Keep creating in me a clean heart. Fill me with pure thoughts and holy desires, ready to please you." David shows us that true repentance goes beyond feeling guilty; it involves deep sorrow for sin, honest confession, and a desire for inner transformation.

RESPOND

What sins are you hiding that you need to confess? How have your confessions changed your walk with God?

RECITE

Father, please continue to create in me a new heart, because I know no sin is beyond your forgiveness. Amen.

Saturday,
FEBRUARY 21
Alberta Barrett

READ

2 Peter 3:8-10 (NASV)

REFLECT

Recently, I've been reflecting on the importance of learning to wait. Waiting is tough, but doing it skillfully is even more challenging. This made me think of the Marshmallow Test videos, in which parents tested children to see whether they could wait for two marshmallows or give in to the single marshmallow in front of them. Most kids struggled to wait, and one ate the marshmallow before her mother left. I don't blame her, because honestly, I'm not good at waiting either.

In today's passage, Peter reminds believers not to mistake waiting on God for neglect. Just because God does not come when we want does not mean He is indifferent or powerless. God's delay is not slowness – it is patience. Recently, I watched a video of a dog doing the Marshmallow Test. Unlike children, the dog waited patiently because he was trained to trust his owner, knowing his owner would return, keep his promise, and reward him.

Waiting on God is about trust. Peter shows God's patience stems from His desire for repentance, not destruction. His timing reflects mercy, not absence. God's promises will be fulfilled as He said, even if His timing is unknown to us. Let's focus on waiting faithfully and trusting God's purposeful patience. Much like the dog in the video, we must humbly surrender to God's timing, trusting that He will return just as He promised.

RESPOND

Where do you find surrendering to God's timing most difficult right now? How might knowing that God is a Promise-keeper change the way you wait?



RECITE

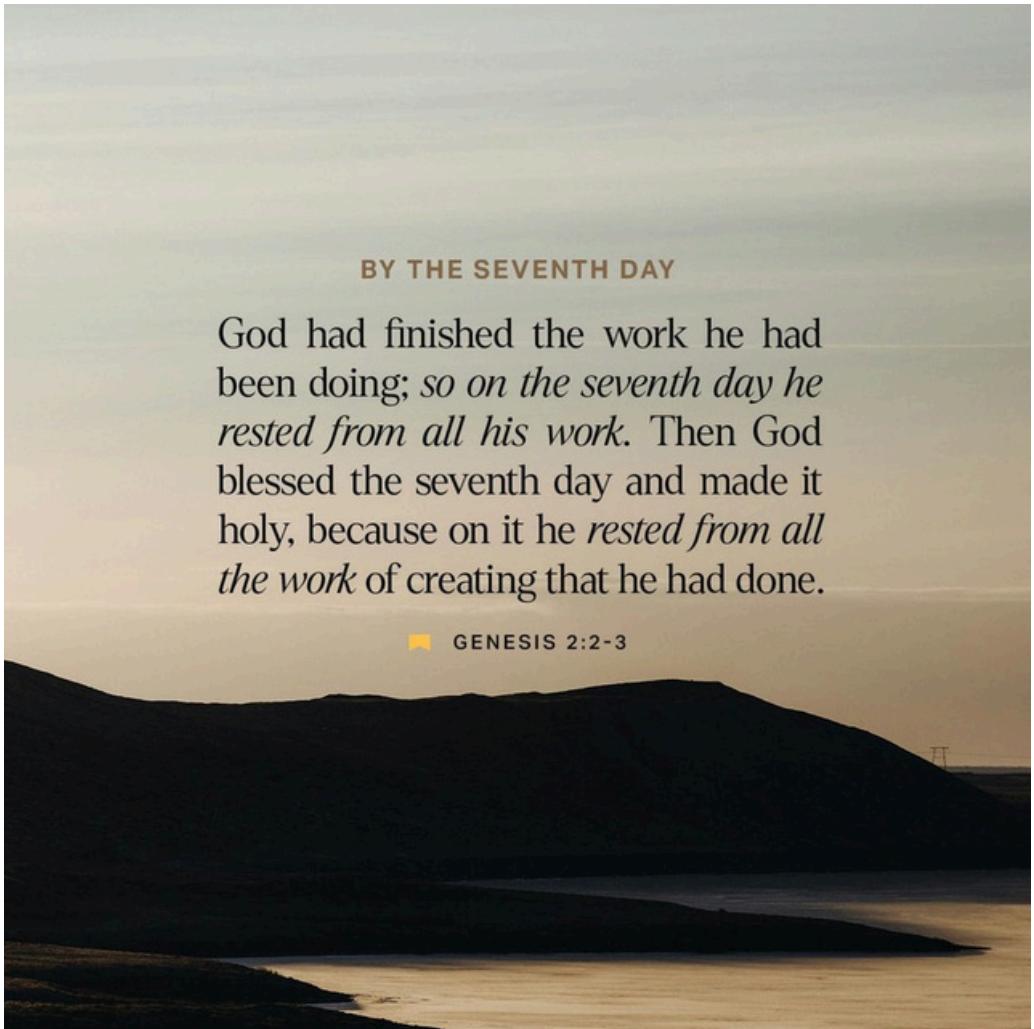
Lord, help me to humbly surrender to your timing, trusting that you are forever trustworthy. Amen.

SUNDAY
FEBRUARY 22
DAY OF REST

BY THE SEVENTH DAY

God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

GENESIS 2:2-3



Week Two

Monday, February 23 - Saturday, February 28

Hungry for Connection

Desire & Need for Christ



I Give Myself Away

Monday,
FEBRUARY 23
Steve Watson

READ

Luke 19:1-10 (NRSV)

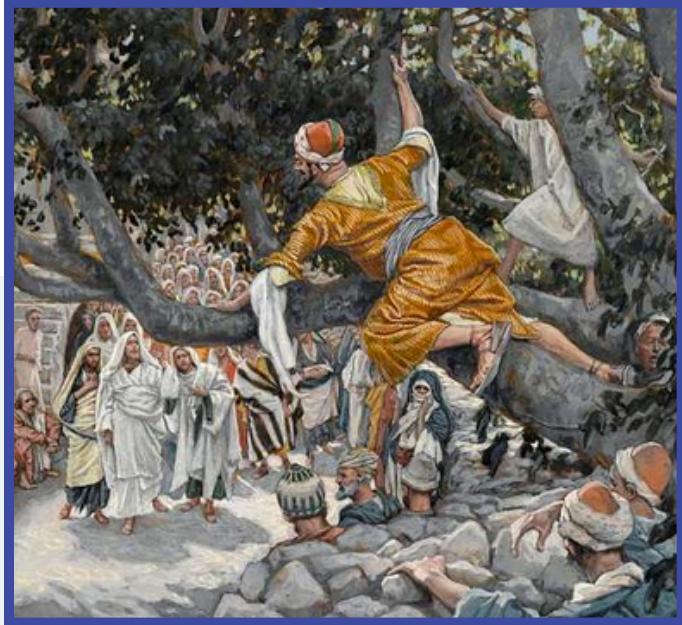
REFLECT

We know from the text that Zacchaeus was a wealthy tax collector, and so we can assume that he had access to whatever he wanted. It probably took a lot to get him excited about something. The text doesn't speak of any illness or disability that couldn't be overcome with money. He probably didn't think he had anything to gain from an interaction with Jesus. Yet the arrival of Jesus had Zacchaeus running and climbing a tree like a child and humiliating himself in front of crowds of people just so he could catch a glimpse. He just wanted to see who Jesus was.

Whether Zacchaeus knew it or not, he had everything to gain from the experience. Even those who seemingly have everything else still have a desire to see and be seen by God. And those who seek God's presence will find it, and they will be transformed by it.

RESPOND

In what ways in my daily life am I seeking to be present with God?



RECITE

God, thank you for seeking me out and saving me. Amen.

Tuesday,
FEBRUARY 24
Jenifer Dent

READ

Titus 3:3-7 (NKJV)

REFLECT

"Y'all need Jesus" is currently a popular quote printed on t-shirts, hoodies, and hats in the Christian apparel space. It reflects a simple truth with a touch of snarky sarcasm and coded in religious superiority that seems to appeal and apply to many who call themselves Christians today. Though the words are true and partially accurate, the attitude behind the sentiment isn't the most effective for sharing the faith, spreading the Gospel, and making true disciples of Jesus Christ.

In this segment of Paul's letter of pastoral advice to Titus and believers who are truly submitted followers of Jesus, who know how to conduct themselves in community with pseudo-Christian leaders, those who believe like them, and unbelievers alike, Paul says, "Remember, we too were once all kinds of wrong." The truth is, we all need the kindness & love of GOD our Savior in Jesus Christ.

We have been justified by His Grace and made heirs with the hope of eternal life.

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found. Was blind, but now I see.

"We all need Jesus."

RESPOND

What about you has changed, is changing, or needs to change because of your relationship with Jesus Christ? How might remembering how wretched you once were before Jesus changed your life help you to view and relate to others who you know need Jesus?

**JESUS,
I NEED YOU.**

RECITE

LORD Jesus, thank you for your generous, transformative Grace and Love that saves, changes, and justifies a wretch like me. Amen.

Wednesday,
FEBRUARY 25
Sonya Jones

READ

Romans 8:1-4 (ESV)

REFLECT

Aristotle defined law as "reason free from passion", meaning it is objective, just, and rooted in truth for the common good. In a similar way, God's law given through Moses was objective and just. Yet its purpose was never merely to regulate behavior. It was meant to draw us into righteous relationship with God. The problem was that the law alone could not restore that broken connection. What the law could not accomplish, God fulfilled through love by sending Jesus Christ.

Every human heart knows the hunger for connection. We long to belong, to be seen, and to be known. This longing points to a deeper truth: we were created not only for connection with one another, but with God. Sin disrupted that connection. Unable to obey God's law, we walked according to the flesh (our own way) and the result was condemnation, the just declaration of guilt and punishment.

But God did not leave us condemned. God desired that we would be connected to Him. So, He sent His Son. Jesus fulfilled the law by bearing its just punishment on our behalf, so that those who walk according to the Spirit might be set free.

The law is fulfilled. Justice is satisfied. Connection is restored. As Romans 8:1 declares, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

RESPOND

Where have you been trying to meet your need for connection apart from God?



RECITE

God, thank you for meeting my hunger and need for connection with you through Jesus Christ, which allows me to declare, "No condemnation, I'm free!" Amen.

Day 7

Thursday,
FEBRUARY 26
Abbie Tolbert



READ

John 4:7-30 (NLT)

REFLECT

The other day, I had what I like to call an episode. I became overheated and faint (which usually doesn't happen during the winter). As I sat with my head down on the table, I realized that I hadn't drunk anything since 11 AM, and it was now past 4:30 PM. My body was having a physical reaction to its lack of water. Even though I didn't feel thirsty, I NEEDED water.

Jesus was thirsty after His journey, so he sat at Jacob's well waiting for the Samaritan woman to come and draw water. She would help Him satisfy His physical thirst, and in return, Jesus would satisfy her spiritual thirst. We often try to satisfy our inner (spiritual) thirst with other things and people. But none can satisfy or quench our thirst but Christ. There is a fountain full of grace that flows from Emmanuel's veins.

The woman at the well desired Jesus' living water so she would never be thirsty and wouldn't need to come to the well for water. Like her, sometimes we want what Jesus offers so He can fulfill our physical needs. But Jesus does more than meet our physical needs; He gives us everlasting life and sustains our souls. Without Christ, our souls will cry out desperately seeking nourishment, just as my body cried out for water.

So, drink from Christ's well and satisfy your soul. Don't go hours, weeks, or years without drinking from the well of Living Water.

RESPOND

What have you used to satisfy your inner thirst that isn't Jesus? Think back to the last time you went without drinking from Christ's well. What happened because of your thirst?

RECITE

*Dear Lord,
You are living water, quench my thirst and
refresh my soul. Amen*

Friday,
FEBRUARY 27
Tanya Ingram

READ

Ephesians 1:4-8

REFLECT

During the Lenten season, we often become so focused on abstaining and repentance that we miss the promise of "becoming." Yet becoming is beautifully outlined in Ephesians 1:4-8. The systems of the world offer empty promises. We are told to become a better version of ourselves, yet real transformation only comes through a life submitted to Christ and the truth of God's word.

Ephesians 1:4-8 reminds the believer that God's plan is that all who choose to call Him Father and claim Jesus as Savior would be adopted into His family. Before the foundation of the world was set, before the fall in the garden or the women found an empty tomb, God decided we would be the beneficiaries of priceless promises. The promise that we could live a life set apart for God in a fallen world. A promise that frees us from private and public shame and offers us redemption through Christ's blood. Where sin and its wages of death and the grave would hound us all, the child of God has been promised the forgiveness of sins and God's grace. There is so much grace that we would no longer be resigned to feeling depleted by life or lacking in a world system that says "younger, richer, faster, or more" equal blessings. Instead, God's grace can be experienced as a lavish outpouring, which fills us with anticipation and curiosity. Since we are the benefactors of such precious promises and generous love, Lent must be a time to ask God, "What am I becoming in this season?" Becoming is limitless when we offer our lives to God.

RESPOND

How is God prompting you to become as a result of His precious adoption, redemption, and forgiveness of sin?



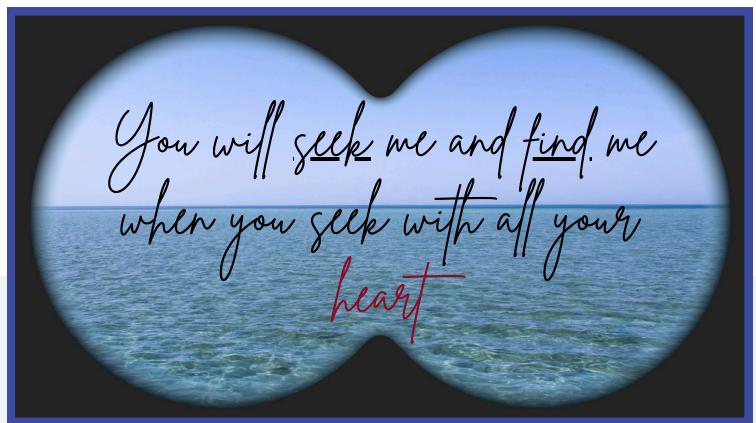
RECITE

"Have thine own way Lord, have thine own way, You are the Potter, I am the clay". Amen.

Saturday,
FEBRUARY 28
AG Anderson

READ

Jeremiah 29:13



REFLECT

Jeremiah 29:13 is one of the most iconic verses in the Bible. It exemplifies what every believer's foundational principle should be — seek God. And this verse comes with a DEFINITE promise: "You will seek Me and find Me..." But this is not a passive seek. This promise is fulfilled through persistently seeking God with all our heart (mind, will, intentions, desires) UNTIL His people find Him.

The Hebrew word for "find" can also be translated as "encounter." This is a moment — not just learning about God, but a life-changing encounter. How do we know if we've had this type of encounter? God couples this promise with more promises. In the very next verse, He says He will restore your fortunes and gather you from all nations. Israel heard that in their context — but Christ fulfills it!

In the New Testament, God refers to the church as the body of Christ, and Jesus welcomes all nations into this free gift. And as a result of being baptized into His body, we receive the seal of the Holy Spirit — the guarantee of our inheritance (our "fortunes").

Our job as believers can seem complicated at times, but it doesn't have to be. When we feel overwhelmed in this walk, we can always return to the core foundational principle: seek Jesus —persistently, wholeheartedly—until we find Him.

RESPOND

What in my life is preventing me from seeking Jesus with all my heart—my mind, will, desires, and intentions?

RECITE

Heavenly Father, thank You for drawing me to Your Word. Lord, please remove every obstacle, burden, and hindrance that keeps me from giving You my whole heart. Amen.

SUNDAY MARCH DAY OF REST

MATTHEW 11:28-29

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.



Week Three

Monday, March 2 - Saturday, March 7

With Open Hearts

Prayerful



Monday,
MARCH 2
Denise Williams

READ

Ephesians 6:18 (NIV)



REFLECT

Go to the Lord. God invites us to come to Him with an open heart in every way and at every moment. When we go to God with our questions, concerns, and speak honestly about what's on our hearts, we can be confident that God hears us and will give us what we truly need.

When we pray in the Spirit, we yield ourselves to God's guidance. The Holy Spirit helps us understand what we are praying and leads us with wisdom and clarity. Prayer is not about getting wrapped up in our own understanding, but it's about surrendering to God's leading. As we stay alert and attentive, we learn to rely on the wisdom, understanding, and encouragement that God gives us.

Sometimes we may feel like our lives don't line up with where we think God wants us to be. Maybe your prayer life feels weak, or you feel distant from Him. But God's love is constant. We can have confidence in that love. And because of His love, our hearts are encouraged. That encouragement doesn't stop with us. It's not meant to stop with us. It moves us to share with others how God has helped us and how He is willing to help them too. So, Go to the Lord. Do not give up. And pray with an open heart. God loves you and is with you.

RESPOND

What does praying in the Spirit look like to you? What would change in your life if you prayed in the Spirit on every occasion?

RECITE

Lord, lead me to pray in the Spirit at all times, that I may be confident and find encouragement in You. Amen.

Tuesday,

MARCH 3

Dayna C. Brown

READ

Hebrews 4:16 (NRSV)

REFLECT

It is said that, whenever the word ‘therefore’ appears in scripture, we should ask, ‘what is therefore, there for?’ The verses just before today’s focus scripture suggest that the ‘therefore’ is meant to highlight how the finished work of Jesus should drive and dictate how we approach God. How we come before God is based not on us, but on where Jesus has been and where Jesus is.

Jesus has been where we’ve all been. He took on human flesh, acquainted Himself with the trials of life, felt what we’ve felt and was tempted just as we are, but came out victorious – ‘For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.’ (Hebrews 4:15) Jesus is where we’re all aiming to go: Heaven, to dwell in the presence of God. ‘...we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens.’ (Hebrews 4:14)

During this Lenten season, we are reminded that, in between where Jesus has been and where Jesus is, our Savior was boldly beaten, boldly bruised, and boldly buried to pay the price for our sins, before rising with bold power that grants us access, by faith, to the grace and mercy of God. Secure, confident, and humbled by the bold lengths God, through Jesus, has gone to show His infinite love for us, “Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

RESPOND

How are you approaching God?



RECITE

God, I thank you for the bold and beautiful ways you show your love for me. Help me love you that same way. Amen.

Day 12

Wednesday,
MARCH 4
Quenna Slaughter

READ

Matthew 6:5-8 (NET)

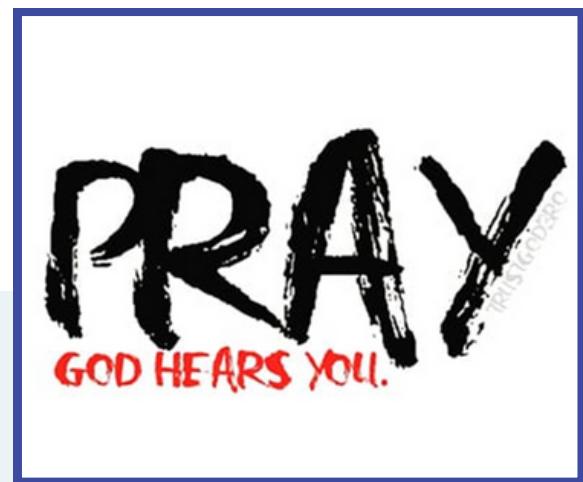
REFLECT

Lord... I'm tired....I'm exhausted and drained of all that I know, of all the things I've been taught, and of all the ways I feel. Help me, guide me, know me so that I can find solitude and safety in you. You've got me this far, ain't no way I'm going back—my safe space. I give my all to you. "When you pray, do not babble repetitiously like the Gentiles, because they think that by their many words they will be heard." (Matthew 6:7 NET)

I used to believe I had to pray perfect prayers, saying the right things in the right way. Do the perfect things that God would see fit. Growing up in a religious family, the God I grew to know was one I was taught, not one I'd experienced and knew loved me. God became someone I thought I had to perform for. I had to make the cut to be seen by Him. It wasn't until I started on the hunt for myself and chased a personal relationship with God that I realized He already knew me. And He chose me daily. He was never judging me or expecting me to be on my best behavior. He truly knows my heart. He truly loves me. There was no need to overexplain, overthink, or overexpress myself to others. There was no need to overextend myself to other things that didn't bring substance, joy, and love to my life. It was always Him—my safe space. I learned to pray what I felt in the moment. My truest of emotions. Because God already knew and continued to show up for me through my obstacles and in my joy, I learned to be conversational with my God. To keep it real. A buck. Transparent. Intentional. Like He does for us daily. I refused to continue hiding behind uncertainty and started trusting the God I knew for myself.

RESPOND

In what areas of your life are you still performing for others rather than being honest with God?



RECITE

God, I don't pray to be seen. I pray to be known. Amen.

Thursday,
MARCH 5
Carlisle Greaves

READ

1 John 5:14-15 (NIV)



REFLECT

Certain words leap off the page for me: confidence, anything, whatever. Early in my faith, I approached God with quiet humility—asking without expectation, trusting God would supply needs and utilities more than any want. The idea of confidently claiming anything according to God's will felt startling, even foreign.

Yet spiritual growth has shown me that true confidence is the fruit of a deep relationship with God. The more we know God's character, the more we understand God's will—thus the more boldly we pray. This confidence strengthens our path and sharpens our ability to discern God's answers rather than the answers we imagine. Without intimacy, we often miss them, searching for dramatic, worldly solutions to divine requests. Someone praying for change may overlook the very provision God sends because their vision remains limited to the physical world.

This passage declares that what we ask is already ours. I see this through the lens of Purpose: our purpose has no ceiling, only a horizon that continually expands. When we ask for something aligned with that purpose, it is already "provisioned" in God's infinite supply—not waiting to be created, but ready to be brought online the moment we have the maturity to steward it.

Even imperfect requests may be granted in refined form to teach us God's will. Prayer becomes less about pleading and more about asking for eyes to see how God is already answering. The pathways we resist—training, waiting, detours—often become the very provision that prepares us for God's final answer. When we align our "anything" with God's purpose, we step into what is already prepared. God hears us, and in that knowing, we discover we already have what we asked for.

RESPOND

Is there a prayer you feel has gone unanswered? Looking back with fresh eyes, is it possible God has provided a "divine version" of your request?

RECITE

Lord, help me to pray with the confidence that You have already provisioned everything I need. Amen.

Friday,
MARCH 6
Fayeth Hall

READ

John 11:41-42 (NIV)

REFLECT

How odd would it be if we thanked people before they ever did anything for us? Picture this: you are on your way into the grocery store and see someone heading toward the door ahead of you. Before you even know whether they will hold it open, you say, "Thank you for holding the door for me." Some people would immediately find this strange. Others might even consider it rude, as if you are assuming something that has not yet happened.

While this kind of preemptive gratitude may feel out of place in our daily social interactions, it should be common in our spiritual journey and our prayer lives. This is exactly what Jesus models in John 11:41–42. In today's focus scripture, Jesus offers thanks to God the Father before the miracle takes place. He thanks God for hearing Him, expressing confidence in a relationship where trust comes before visible results.

As we move through this Lenten season, this scripture invites us not only to focus on what we pray, but also on how we pray. We must come to Christ knowing who He is, knowing that He has our best interest at heart, thanking Him in advance, and trusting that He will answer our prayers in a way that is best suited for us. Lent reminds us that faith is often formed in the space between promise and fulfillment, between the stone still sealed and resurrection not yet visible. In this sacred waiting, Jesus models a posture of gratitude, confidence, and intentional witness, calling us to reflect on how our prayers shape both our own hearts and the faith of those around us.

RESPOND

What are some things in your life that you are waiting for God to answer? How can you thank God in advance for those unanswered prayers?



RECITE

God I know you hear me and I thank you in advance for how you will answer my prayers before I even speak them. Amen.

Saturday,
MARCH 7
Antoine Britt

READ

Luke 18:1

REFLECT

Luke 18:1 tells us that Jesus shared a parable “to show them that they should always pray and not give up.” That single line frames prayer not as a religious obligation, but as a persistent relationship.

Think about a missed call from someone you love. You didn’t ignore them on purpose —you were busy, distracted, or overwhelmed. Yet once you notice the missed call, something stirs inside you. You feel the need to respond, to reconnect, to let them know they matter. Even if time has passed, the call still deserves an answer.

Jesus teaches that prayer works the same way. God is always reaching out, always inviting us into connection. But life has a way of pulling our attention in a thousand directions. Prayer is often less about us initiating contact and more about us returning God’s call. Throughout our days, God reaches out through quiet nudges, whispered reminders, moments of conviction, or expected peace. Yet busyness and distractions can cause us to miss those invitations.

The good news is that God is patient. Whenever we respond, the line is never busy, the voicemail never fills up, and it is never too late. Prayer is an act of reconnecting — pausing long enough to say, “I am here. I am listening”. Let’s make time for God the same way that we make time for a missed call from a friend. God is waiting.

RESPOND

What ways has God been trying to get your attention? Have you responded?



RECITE

Lord, help me to recognize when you are speaking and make it a priority to respond. Amen.

SUNDAY
MARCH 8
DAY OF REST

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack *nothing*.

He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me
beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. ←

He guides me along the right paths for his *name's sake*.

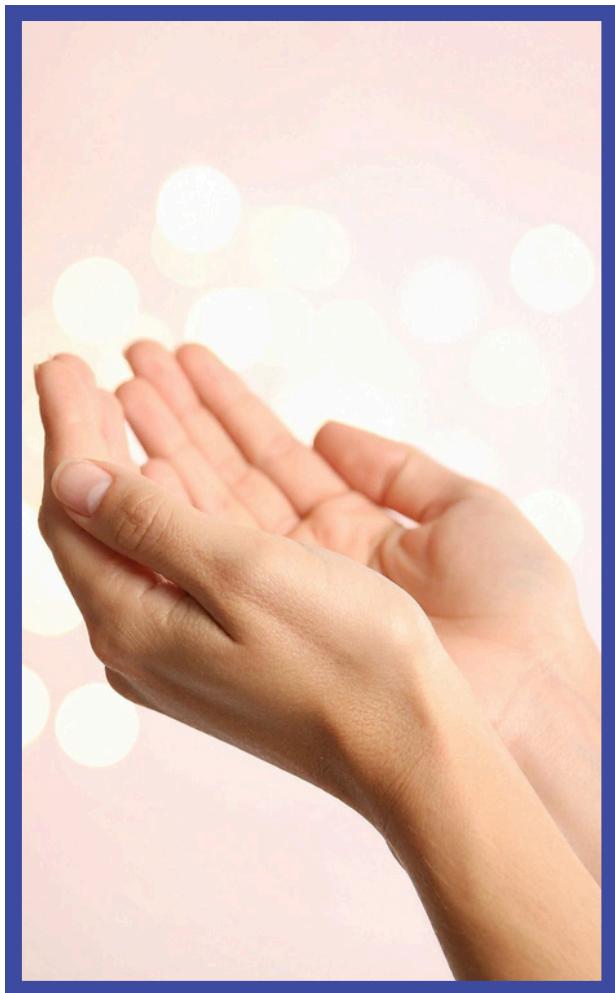
■ PSALMS 23:1-3

Week Four

Monday, March 9 - Saturday, March 14

With Hands Open

Thankful. Available. Accessible.



Monday,
MARCH 9
John McNeill

READ

Isaiah 55:3 (NIV)

REFLECT

Again, God invites us to stand and be fully present with our hands open — grateful, available, and ready to receive whatever God desires to give. Isaiah 55:3 echoes that posture beautifully. God's call to "come" and "listen" is not merely an instruction; it is an invitation to openness. To listen is to unclench our hands. To come is to make ourselves available. To receive life is to acknowledge that we cannot sustain ourselves.

God promises an "everlasting covenant," a love that does not expire when we are tired, distracted, or unsure. But open hands are required to hold a gift this generous. When our hands are full with worry, control, busyness, or self-reliance, we struggle to grasp the life God is offering.

Recently, I faced a big decision about whether to take on a new responsibility. I kept weighing pros and cons, but the more I analyzed, the more uneasy I felt. Finally, I prayed, "Lord, help me listen." In that quiet moment, clarity came—not from my reasoning, but from His peace. Discernment begins with open hands.

This passage reminds us that availability to God begins with gratitude. We come because God has already been faithful. We listen because God has already spoken love over us. We open our hands because God has already opened His. To live, we must receive. And to receive, we must be open.

RESPOND

What might you need to release to come to God with open hands? How is God inviting you to be more available or accessible to His voice this season?



RECITE

Lord, open my hands and my heart so I may gratefully receive the life You offer. Amen.

Tuesday,
MARCH 10
Will Agudo

READ

Psalm 136:1-3 (NKJV)

REFLECT

There have been many days recently when my gratitude has been fragile. The last year has been very trying for my family and me. As we deal with life's challenges, our unstable human relationships, or our own irregular feelings, we will struggle to find solid ground. In this uncertainty, Psalm 136 offers stability in one sentence, "For His mercy endures forever". (NKJV)

The Psalmist, believed to be King David, begins with an invitation to give thanks. We are not just thanking a distant force; we are thanking the "Lord," the "God of gods," and the "Lord of lords." This establishes God's supreme authority. He is above every power, every worry, and every king that walks, has walked, or will walk on the earth. However, the reason for our thanksgiving isn't His incredible and immense power; our reason for thanking Him is for His goodness.

We need to lift our heads up and remember His genuine and "steadfast" goodness.

The Hebrew word often translated here as "mercy" or "love" is hesed. It refers to a loyal, covenant love that refuses to let go. It is a love that is not based on our performance but on His character. When we are faithless, He remains faithful. When we stumble, His mercy is there to catch us.

The repetition in this scripture is not accidental. By repeating "His mercy endures forever" in every single verse, the Psalmist is helping us train our minds. He is reminding us that no matter what happened yesterday, and no matter what we face tomorrow, God's mercy is a constant, renewable resource. It is the one thing in the universe that will never run dry.

RESPOND

In what areas of your life has your gratitude felt fragile? What can you do today to remind yourself that God's love endures forever?



RECITE

Heavenly Father, thank You that Your goodness is not a mood that changes, but a reality that stands firm. Amen.

Wednesday,
MARCH 11
Alicia Anderson

READ

James 1:17-18 (NIV)



REFLECT

When I read this passage and put it into my own words, this is what I see. If it's good and perfect, it must be from one source: above. God is above. He's a good, good Father who knows how to give his children good gifts. He's consistently, reliably good. He does not change. God intentionally selected us to enter the earth realm. He invested in us as His creation and is expecting a return on that investment.

God has been challenging me to not just memorize scripture, but make it my operating system. He wants me to program my thinking with it, not for the sake of being able to simply quote it. He wants it to seep out of me - into my attitudes, and my words, come out through my hands and my feet. He wants to see my body move to the rhythm of truth. I want to literally embody the word of truth, so that as I move about the world, God can speak to His creation through me - He can use my voice, my actions, my presence to impact the world for His glory. I believe this is how He expects to be a kind of first fruit of His creation.

RESPOND

How does your life produce fruit that honors the Creator?

RECITE

I believe you have gifted me with what is perfect for me and in response I will honor You with my life. Amen.

Thursday,
MARCH 12
Meoshia Wilson

READ

Matthew 13:44-46 (NLT)

REFLECT

There's nothing like discovering something precious and priceless, whether you find it or it finds you. Unexpected treasure shocks and excites us, while hunted treasure brings joy and relief. Either way, the dreamer within us is awakened, since this discovery could change the trajectory of our lives. Yet we don't possess it until we complete the transaction required to obtain it.

An exchange must take place if we want to own what we have found. Although the possession is priceless, that exchange has a price. This is what Jesus was teaching in the parable: surprise treasure and sought-after pearls have a dollar value, but they are invaluable compared to the Kingdom of Heaven. The cost is "selling all" so we can gain what is truly precious. We must trade our desires, will, path, and timing for the Kingdom of Heaven.

When we do, we receive not only the Kingdom but the King—the mind of Christ, His desires for our hearts, His will for our lives, His Word lighting our path, His Spirit guiding us into all truth, and His timing concerning His promises. Christ's payment forever outweighs anything we could offer, yet He still invites us to give ourselves away since we were bought at a price. We are His, joint-heirs with Christ, with access to all that is His. That is truly precious and priceless, and worth our exchange.

RESPOND

What are you withholding that keeps you from the exchange you need to make? Will you repent and boldly break covenant with what's keeping you from the precious and priceless Kingdom of Heaven?



RECITE

Father, in Jesus's name, I break covenant with (fill in the blank) and exchange it for the entirety of you and your Kingdom.
Amen.

Friday,
MARCH 13
Brenda Alexander

READ

Luke 6:38 (NKJV)

REFLECT



Looking historically at the background of this verse, I discovered that in the ancient marketplace, buyers who bought grain received a great measure as the generous merchant pressed down and shook the grain together into a container until it ran over. The overflowing grain was then poured into the folds of the buyer's garment for transport. What a blessing! Jesus used this parable from the Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:20-49) to illustrate to His disciples and other followers the value of being generous to others and obedient to His Word.

For just as the buyer received an overabundance of grain for his purchase, so the Lord supplies us with bountiful blessings even BEYOND what WE give. We are called to give from the heart and be merciful, nonjudgmental, forgiving, generous, and gracious to others. By doing so, we reflect the character of God, which leads to abundant physical and spiritual blessings on earth and in the life to come.

As disciples of Christ, let us demonstrate reciprocal love for others--realizing that "when we sow bountifully, we will reap bountifully; when we sow sparingly, we will reap sparingly." Remember, GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER. (2 Corinthians 9:6-7 NIV)

RESPOND

Reflect on a time when you have experienced generosity because you gave generously.

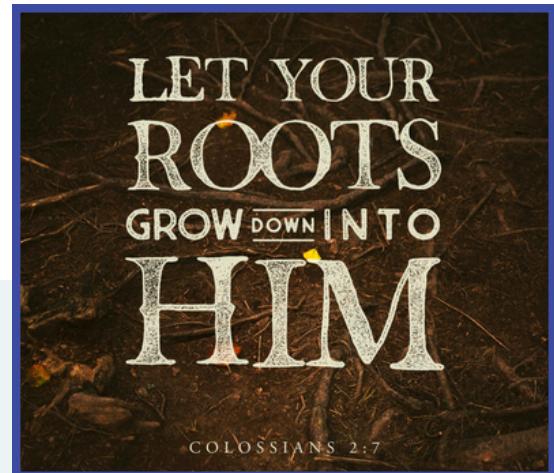
RECITE

Lord God, thank You for the continuous outpouring of Your love. Help me to share Your love with everyone I meet. Amen.

Saturday,
MARCH 14
Sarah Samson

READ

Colossians 2:6-7 (NLT)



REFLECT

Paul reminds us in Colossians that accepting Jesus as Lord is only the beginning. Our faith is not meant to be something we turn to only in moments of need, but a relationship we continually nurture. If we run to Jesus only when life becomes difficult, how can we expect to recognize His presence when life feels calm? Faith that is not tended to is easier to lose.

To let our roots grow down into Christ requires intention. It means spending time in His Word, creating moments for prayer, and choosing daily conversation with God. When we walk closely with Him, we invite Him into every part of our lives—not just the struggles, but the ordinary moments as well. In doing so, our hearts begin to change. We become more aware of His grace, more grateful for small blessings, and more thankful for each step we are given.

When life moves quickly, it becomes easy to take God's grace for granted. We may assume He will always be there without considering the condition of our own faith. But a strong faith is built, not assumed. Gratitude grows when we recognize that every good thing comes from Him.

As we deepen our roots in Christ, thankfulness begins to overflow naturally. After all, if not God, then who? There is no one else worthy of our trust, our devotion, and our thanks.

RESPOND

When trials come, do you seek Jesus or retreat from Him? Where do you turn first?

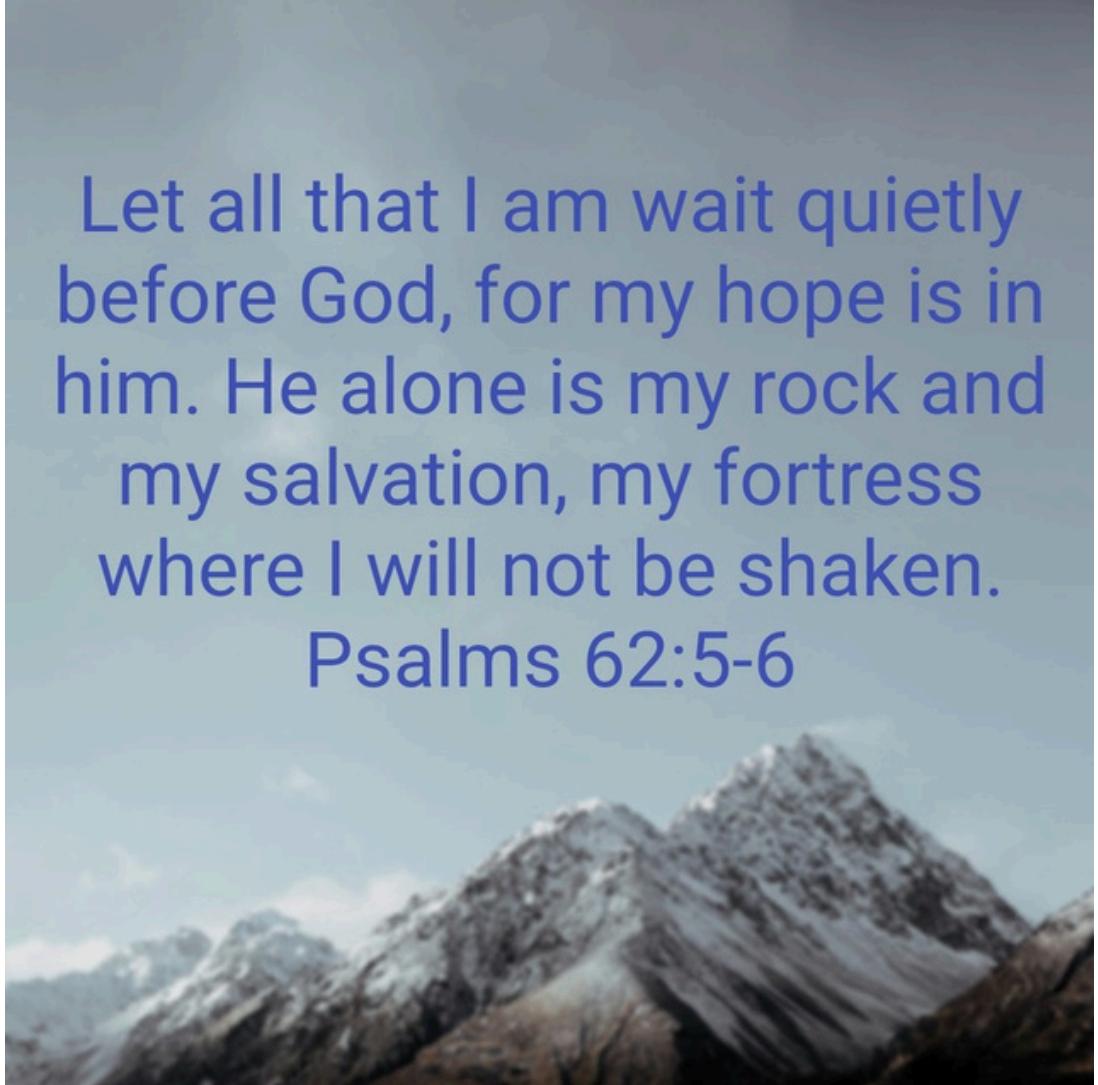
RECITE

*Thank you, Jesus, for everything in my life;
please forgive me for the moments I take
Your grace for granted. Amen.*

SUNDAY
MARCH
DAY OF
REST

Let all that I am wait quietly before God, for my hope is in him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will not be shaken.

Psalms 62:5-6



Week Five

Monday, March 16 - Saturday, March 21

A Healthy Community

Unity



Monday,
MARCH 16
Lareff White

READ

Ephesians 4:1-4 (NLT)

REFLECT

What was your favorite subject in school? One of my favorite subjects was science... specifically, biology. I'll admit, I'm biased. My mother taught me twice: Honors Biology and AP Biology.

What I loved most wasn't just the content; it was the lab. That's where everything came alive! As the teacher, my mother saw the lab as more than an activity, it was an opportunity. It revealed how well the class worked together, whether we truly understood what we claimed to know, and if we could effectively apply the information we had been given. In many ways, she was watching community form in real time.

Ephesians 4 presents a similar challenge. Knowing Scripture matters, but Paul eloquently reminds us that living it out daily is where growth happens. It's not enough to feel like we've "aced" life just because we can articulate the written Word. Life itself becomes the lab, and unity in Christ the ultimate goal.

God, our Instructor, makes the assignment clear and encourages us to show up daily and treat others with intention. Because humility, gentleness, patience, grace, love, hope, and peace aren't optional; they are essential ingredients that shape our character and challenge us to grow. God has designed us such that when there is unity in the Body of Christ, even our differences have the ability to reflect His love. This is our responsibility. Class is in session.

RESPOND

Do you get as excited about living out the Word of God in community as you do about reading and learning it?



RECITE

Lord, help me to be a doer of the Word and reflect the heart and community of Jesus today. Amen.

Tuesday,
MARCH 17
Marsha Mottesheard

READ

Psalm 133:1 (MSG)

REFLECT

How do you feel when you hear—or participate in—an argument or conflict? I think most of us feel anxious, worried, and hope for a quick ending. Later, we may not even remember what the trouble was about, and yet damage may have been done.



We will never be able to achieve the one perfect community created by God for Adam and Eve. Psalm 133:1 is a poignant statement of the obvious—how much better our lives are when we (family members, fellow churchgoers, friends, co-workers, neighbors, etc.) get along. We can have different opinions, of course, and we may have “issues” with each other sometimes (we’re human, after all), but our life goal should be to live in harmony as God would have us do.

I found these song lyrics particularly touching: “Let your love reshape our living, bind our hearts in unity”. The author asks God to change us to point us toward unity—a goal that God desires and that we should. The pursuit of unity in our daily life requires us to consider setting aside our preferences, our longing to be in charge and/or “right” no matter what, or to be the “winner”. God’s willingness to live in harmonious relationships with us should be the model for our thinking and behavior. Surely there will be bumps along the way, but we learn to persevere because the goal is worth it as we model our loving God.

RESPOND

Are you a participant in a relationship (or more than one) where conflict and strife are ever present and it feels like things will never change? Are you part of the problem or the solution?

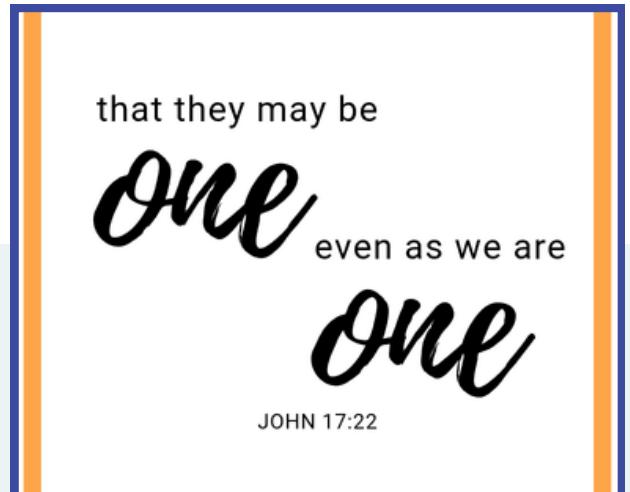
RECITE

Lord, I look to you to reshape my living. Help me to achieve more harmonious relationships with others, that we may live together in unity. Amen.

Wednesday,
MARCH 18
Roberta Greaves

READ

John 17:20-21 (AMP)



REFLECT

We are often told that as Christians, we are representatives of Jesus Christ and part of the Body of Christ. We are members of a bigger family of believers brought together by Christ. But being a good representative and staying connected to the Body is often easier said than done, especially when society is divided instead of unified, which can lead to fleshly anger, disruption of peace, and separation from one another.

That is why it is so important to stay in God and Jesus, and the family of believers. This helps us have a wise and discerning mind, to speak and act from wisdom instead of fleshly emotions, and to accomplish along with others that which we cannot accomplish alone. When we are in God, in Christ, and in harmony with each other as believers, that leads to the world believing and trusting in Christ and the message of the Gospel. Our relationships with God, the Son, and each other show a type of unity that brings people together, whether they are people already in the family of believers or people who may be considering becoming part of the Body of Christ.

This reminds me of why unity and healthy communities are so important. They not only help us individually, but they help society collectively as well.

RESPOND

How can I be more connected to God, Jesus, and other believers? What can I do to help foster unity in my various communities?

RECITE

Lord, thank You for allowing us to be one with You and Your Son. Help us to stay connected so we can be good representatives and help others to believe the Gospel. Amen.

Thursday,
MARCH 19
Abbie Tolbert

READ

Romans 12:4-5 (GNT)

REFLECT

Take a minute and do a body scan. Close your eyes, take several deep breaths. And one by one, bring attention to your feet, legs, chest, back, hands, arms, neck, and head. Notice the sensations in each body part. Do you feel any discomfort, pain, or stiffness? Is there tension you need to release? Now, think about your body as a whole. Reflecting on Romans 12:4-5.

In Romans and Corinthians (1 Cor. 12:12-14), Paul uses the human body as a metaphor to describe our relationship to one another as believers in Christ. Though we are separate individuals, through Christ, we are united as one, forming the Body of Christ. As members of one body, we are now mutually dependent upon one another. Our success as individuals and as the Body hinges on our supporting and caring for one another. We are interconnected, just like the human body. The Passion Translations states that we, "are vitally joined to one another, with each contributing to the others." We use our gifts to spread the Gospel of Christ and nurture other believers. Building up the church through unity and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Until we are mature and meet Christ's standard of completion.

We must also regularly scan the Body of Christ to learn what other members are feeling. Are they in pain, stressed, or need encouragement? Just as proper care of our teeth helps prevent heart disease, caring for one another prevents disunity.

RESPOND

What is your role in the Body of Christ?
How can you aid others fulfilling their role
in the Body of Christ?



RECITE

*Adonai,
Help me aid in the health and prosperity
of the Body of Christ. Amen*

Friday,
MARCH 20
Jason Russell

READ

Galatians 3:26-29 (NIV)

REFLECT

I remember when I read all the way through the Bible that I learned something through context that I'd never figured out just by reading short passages and verses here and there. The early Christians were doing something radical: opening their religion to anyone who wished to join and be baptized in Christ. All were welcome and equal, no matter who they were or what they'd done. In Christ, "There is neither Jew nor Gentile," as Paul wrote in verse 28 here.

Previously, most (though not all) religions were tied to a certain ethnicity or nation. The Egyptians had their gods, the Israelites had God, and so on. But Christianity welcomed all and saw all followers as equal.

Of course, the history of Christianity is full of fallen sinners—just look at how long so many Christians participated in or tolerated slavery despite the very clear "neither slave nor free" language here in Galatians. But we should still strive to live by the principles of this passage today by not passing judgment on our fellow Christians and church members. All of us are children of God and equal in his eyes, no matter how long we've been a believer and no matter how much we sin.

God loves us all, no matter what.

RESPOND

What am I doing to make sure new followers to the faith and new visitors to the church feel just as welcome as I do?



RECITE

Lord, help me to cast aside my judgment and lay such matters at your feet rather than taking them into my own hands. Amen.

Saturday,
MARCH 21
Yafonda Smith

READ

1 Corinthians 1:10 (CEB)

REFLECT

In today's focus scripture the Apostle Paul is encouraging the members of the Corinthian church to come into unity with each other. Paul "urges them to speak the same thing and be in complete harmony, overcoming factions that arose from following different leaders like himself, Apollos, or Cephas."^[1] He encourages them all to get along and stop arguing about who's better. At the time the church was suffering from divisiveness and competition. Paul's message was to stop fighting and focus on Jesus.

If Paul were alive today, I believe his message would be the same, "stop fighting and focus on Jesus." In our world today, we are witnessing again divisiveness in the Church and competitive factions that have declared war against each other. Why is it so hard for God's children to get along when everyone is professing the "same" Jesus? The conclusion I've come to is that we are not professing the same Jesus. The truth is we have fallen so far away from Christ that we have created a Christ in our image and as we are instead of us being transformed into His image and who He is. This is a dangerous place to be. But if we would humbly seek Christ and study His life, maybe we can find our way back to a genuine faith that restores unity in His church bringing us into one accord to be of the same mind and purpose as Christ Jesus.

^[1] Life Application Study Bible (Zondervan), 1991.

"CAN TWO WALK
TOGETHER,
UNLESS THEY
ARE AGREED?"
AMOS 3:3

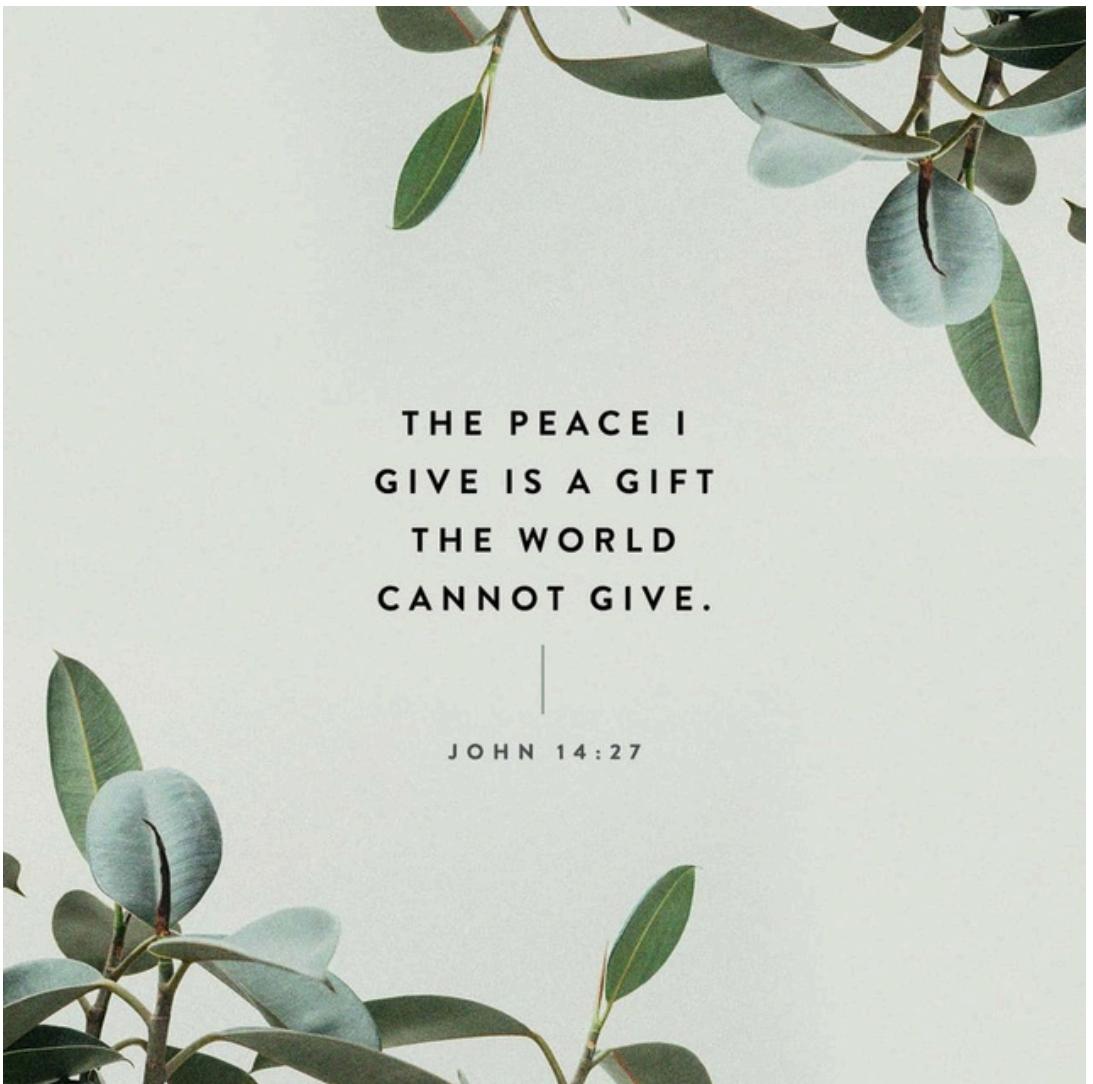
RESPOND

What can I do to promote unity in the community of Christ? Am I a part of the problem or the solution?

RECITE

Lord, create in me a heart that promotes unity in You. Let my life be one that acts justly, loves mercy and walks humbly with You. Amen.

SUNDAY
MARCH 22
DAY OF REST



THE PEACE I
GIVE IS A GIFT
THE WORLD
CANNOT GIVE.

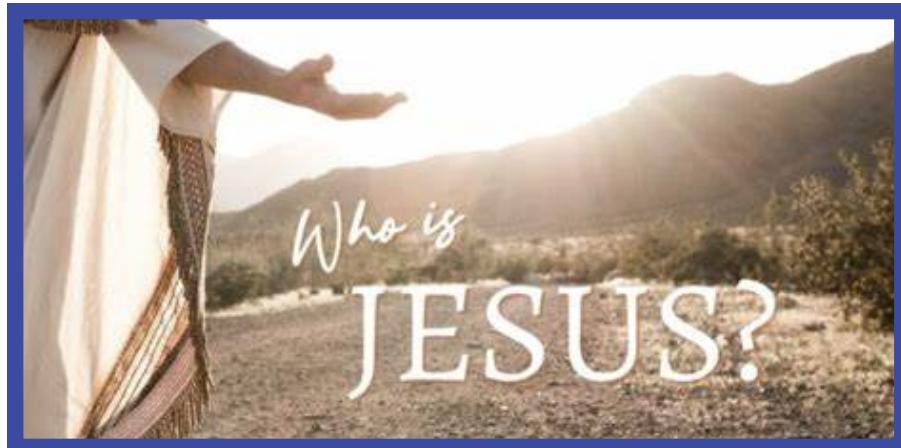
JOHN 14:27

Week Six

Monday, March 23 - Saturday, March 29

Humanity of Christ

Reflecting on the person of Jesus



Monday,
MARCH 23
Adrian Day

READ

Philippians 2:5-8

REFLECT

While much emphasis is often placed on Christ's divinity, scripture equally affirms that Jesus was fully human, sharing in the realities of human life, suffering, and obedience. Christ did not merely appear human through flesh but truly entered the human condition, embracing its limitations and vulnerabilities. In Philippians 2:5–8, we see an example of how Jesus presents himself as one who willingly humbled Himself, taking the form of a servant and becoming obedient unto death. Examining the humanity of Christ allows followers to grasp the depth of God's identification with humanity and provides a model for humility, obedience, and self-giving love

The humanity of Jesus Christ is powerfully revealed in today's text, where believers are called to adopt "the same mind that was in Christ Jesus." Though Jesus existed in the form of God, He chose to empty himself and become human like the rest of us. By becoming human, He accepted the limitations and vulnerabilities that come with it such as feeling pain or temptations of sin. Jesus also made himself a slave rather than a king to show a life lived in submission and love rather than power or status. The passage goes on to show Christ's deepest expression of humanity when it states that He "humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross." This obedience reveals real human suffering and submission to God's will. Through this passage, Jesus' humanity is shown not as weakness, but as faithful, self-giving love that fully enters human experience for the sake of redemption.

RESPOND

What does it mean for you personally that Jesus "emptied himself" and became human—how might this shape the way you relate to others or respond to challenges in your life?

TO BE LIKE JESUS

*Let this mind be in you
which was also in Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 2:5

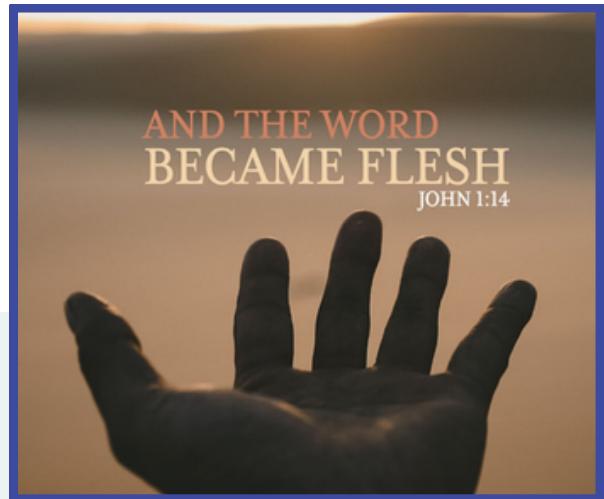
RECITE

*Lord, thank you for showing us how to be
humble and for going far to lead by example.
Amen.*

Tuesday,
MARCH 24
Natasha Simpkins

READ

John 1:14-15 NLT



REFLECT

Have you ever been in a situation where you felt God's presence? A presence so close that it felt like you could reach out and touch Him? Whether a high moment or low moment or somewhere in between...the ability for God to meet us exactly where we are is profound and unlike any other connection we have.

In John 1:14-15, John describes the humanity of Jesus. God sent Jesus to the world where He experienced being human firsthand. Hebrews 2:17–18 (NLT) says: "Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted"

The fact that Jesus experienced human nature gave him the unique perspective of being made like one of us. A human with emotions, reactions, suffering, joys and trials. Because of Jesus' humanity, he can meet us where we are and we can trust and lean on him because we know he truly understands. Through the humanity of Christ, we are able to connect with God in a real, relatable and recognizable way.

RESPOND

Like John, is there anyone you can testify to about the humanity and greatness of Jesus?

RECITE

Lord, help me to receive your unfailing love and faithfulness. Amen.

Wednesday,
MARCH 25
Aleisha Langhome

READ

Matthew 1:18 (AMPC)

REFLECT

"Before they came together..." (Matthew 1:18, AMPC). Those simple words open the quiet beginning of a sacred story wrapped in human complexity. Before Jesus took His first breath, the Holy One was already moving through risk and vulnerability. For Mary, her "yes" to God carried social and communal danger. A pregnancy outside marriage could mean disgrace or even death in her world (Deut. 22:23-24). Yet God chose that entry point—into a woman's questioning trust ("How will this be, since I am a virgin?" – Luke 1:34) and a man's wrestling heart ("being a just man not wanting to put her to shame" – Matt. 1:19)—to show that Divine presence moves within humanity, not apart from it.

Like a movie's prequel, this moment gives depth to everything that follows. We can't celebrate resurrection without remembering the uncertainty that came first. Every victory has a "before," and the Divine is present even there. Before the stable, before the shepherds, there was confusion, conversation, and the quiet work of love taking shape in fragile soil.

Before the blessing, there's always the becoming. In seasons of waiting for breakthrough, relationships in tension, starting fresh after unexpected change, all amid the sting of unsolicited opinions and hasty judgments, grace chooses these very spaces. We're already victorious because Christ's full humanity proves God embraces our questions and wrestling to bring forth glory.

RESPOND

Where is God inviting you to trust Divine purpose even when your story feels uncertain?

How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?

Luke 1:34 NIV

RECITE

Incarnate Love, teach me to rest in my becoming where You already dwell. Amen.

Thursday,
MARCH 26
Brooke Halloway Blake

READ

Hebrews 2:17-18 (CEB)

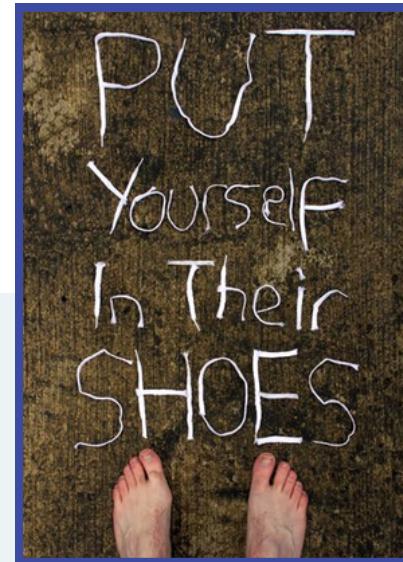
REFLECT

Jesus takes “walking in someone else’s shoes” to another level. As a new parent, I found myself sitting at a table full of other parents discussing how to help kids grow into grounded, well-supported individuals: I was sleep-deprived, but I was there. We considered the things all kids need at any stage when empathy came up. Many agreed: hands down, this was one of the hardest parts of parenting. Even though we were once children ourselves, it is hard to get on a kid’s level, especially when they are having a meltdown about any number of ridiculous things (according to our mature adult minds). Empathy in the midst of an emotional storm takes a gargantuan effort.

Jesus doesn’t struggle to remember. Jesus became like us so he could get on our level in every way. Because of this, because he’s been where we are and because he takes it to heart, he’s merciful, and he’s able to be the best help a human being could find in our hardest moments...you know the ones: when we are having a meltdown about any number of ridiculous or not ridiculous things. Jesus knows, and Jesus cares, and Jesus can help because he chose to walk “a mile in our shoes,” and it led him all the way to a cross.

RESPOND

Write down one of your recent struggles: can you imagine Jesus with the same struggle? How does it feel to find Jesus on your level, and how do you think Jesus can help you?



RECITE

Jesus, you say you understand; help me explore with you how you can help me in my struggles. Amen.

Friday,

MARCH 27

Daniel Simpkins

READ

Isaiah 7:14 (ESV)

REFLECT

Have you ever experienced a season when you had trouble locating God in your time of need? Isaiah declares to us and Matthew confirms in the New Testament that God is with us. (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23) God is more than just for us in our times of uncertainty and struggle. The God of the Bible is our Sovereign God who has proven to be with us through every season of our lives.

Jesus, the Son of God, is our tangible reminder of God being with us. Jesus is like us - wrapped in human flesh with aspirations, longings, feelings, and hopes along with grief, sorrow, disappointment, and temptations. The heart of our faith is knowing that God is with us. It is the announcement that gives us hope, the divine certainty for today, tomorrow, and forever. God has never failed you and God's promises will happen in God's timing. God's will, God's way, and God's word are trustworthy and true.

RESPOND

How can your Christian witness show others that God is with you?



RECITE

God, thank you for being with me. Amen.

Saturday,
MARCH 28
Adia White

READ

Philippians 2:5-8

REFLECT

Philippians 2:5–8 gives us a powerful look at Christ’s humanity that feels both simple and profound. Jesus knew He was fully God, yet He chose to enter our world and humbly walk beside us. He never used His divine status to elevate Himself nor did He treat people as beneath Him. He served people, honored them, and obeyed His Father through real human struggle and real human limits.

This scripture also shows us what true humility looks like. Mark 10:45 reminds us that Jesus came not to be served but to serve and give His life for us all. Humility doesn’t deny strength. It uses strength to serve. It sees people clearly and treats them with respect. Jesus lived this out every day. He served first and aligned Himself with God’s purpose.

His humility flowed from a secure identity and without ego. Because Jesus knew who He was, He could serve without feeling threatened. He further carried humility into action through His obedience to death for our sins.

Servant leadership doesn’t weaken us. Rather, it positions us to reflect Christ. When we follow His example, we let go of entitlement and choose the path that lifts others. Humility becomes a daily practice that shapes our character and points people back to God.

RESPOND

Where do you sense God calling you to show Christ-like humility?

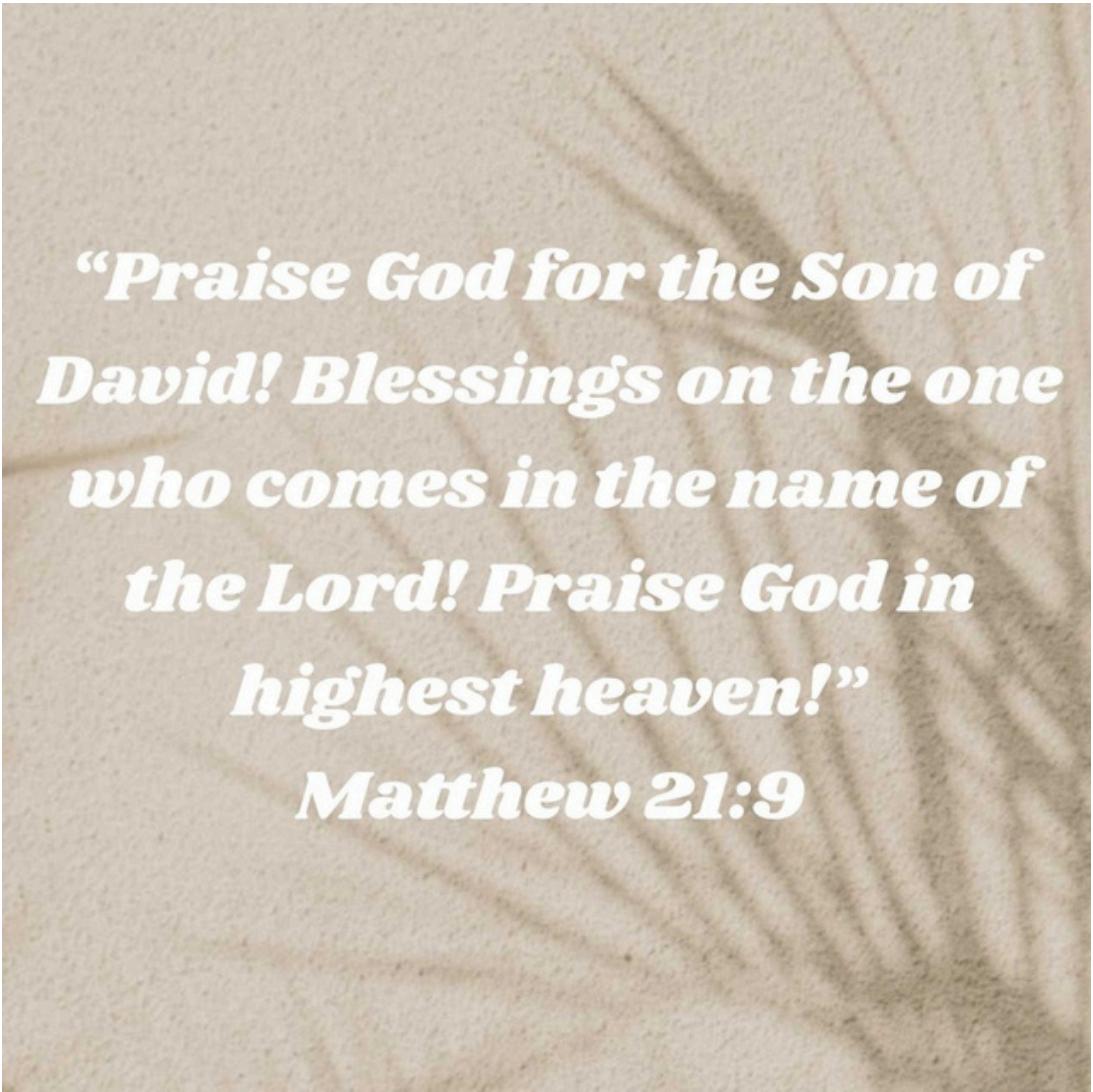


HUMANITY

RECITE

Lord, create a humble and willing heart within me so that my service points people back to You. Amen.

PALM SUNDAY
MARCH 29
DAY OF REST



***“Praise God for the Son of
David! Blessings on the one
who comes in the name of
the Lord! Praise God in
highest heaven!”***

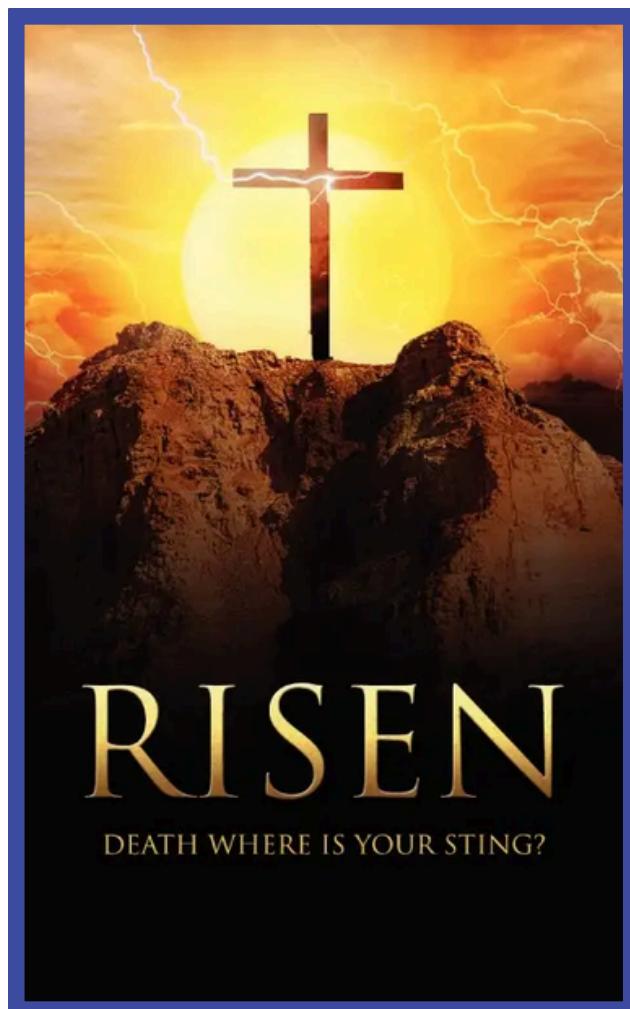
Matthew 21:9

Week Seven

Monday, March 30 - Sunday, April 5

Honored by Christ's Love

He first loved us



Monday,
MARCH 30
Emmitt Drumgoole

READ

John 3:16



REFLECT

I've been saying "love" a lot lately. I love introducing my kids, Langston and Maya, to new things—like exploring the Star Wars universe through Lego movies and video games. Last Spring Break, we went to Houston and ate the best BBQ brisket tamales ever. We love them. And then there are quiet mornings with my spouse, Kristen, sipping coffee and talking about life.

But here's the thing: when I say "love," it's usually casual—about food, fun, and family moments. God's love? That's something else entirely.

In Matthew, we learn that God's love isn't just a feeling—it's action. When God loved the world, God didn't just say it. God gave us Jesus—the Word made flesh—living and breathing among us in love that moves.

And the ways God shows love? They're endless. It's in the grace given when you feel unredeemable. It's in the hope that shows up when life feels heavy. It's in the care for people like Maria, the cook who makes those amazing tamales. God's love meets us at our worst and lifts us up.

So, how much does God love you? More than brisket tacos and Star Wars marathons. Enough to give His Son for you. That's love in action.

RESPOND

Where have you seen God's love in action in your life this week?

RECITE

Lord, thank You for loving me with a love that moves—help me to live in that love today. Amen.

Tuesday,
MARCH 31
Sheryl Robertson

READ

Jeremiah 31:3 (NLT)

REFLECT

Throughout the book of Jeremiah, God sends the people of Israel words of correction and covenant. Time after time, God points out their sin, announces painful consequences, declares His love, and invites their wandering hearts back to God.

In Jeremiah 31, Israel is still in captivity. After acknowledging that more destruction is coming, God promises they will eventually experience blessings and rest. Then during a seemingly forward-focused moment, God directs Israel's attention back – not to their mistakes, but to God's love.

God doesn't simply tell these captive people that they are loved. Instead, God reminds Israel of a previous time, well before their exile, when God declared that He loved them "with an everlasting love." Long ago in their past, God determined to love Israel forever. And as they live through a dismal present awaiting a better future, God reminds Israel of that everlasting love: Love stretching back into history and forward into eternity.

God's everlasting love endures not only time but circumstance. Through their mistakes, the cycles they've struggled to break, and the versions of themselves that are hard to face, God has loved them. In their devotion, disobedience, destruction, and eventually, their dancing, God has loved them.

Like Israel, we have all sinned. Again, and again. But even then - and before then and after then – God has loved us. God is drawing us closer. We need only accept.

RESPOND

How and when has God's love for you proven to be everlasting? How have you responded?



RECITE

God, I'm grateful for your everlasting love. It covers my past, anchors my present, and gives me hope for the future. Amen. Day 36

Wednesday,
APRIL 1
Keffan Russell

READ

Luke 10:25-28 (NIV)

REFLECT

Have you ever tried to assemble a piece of furniture, or mount a large item to a wall, or put together a big toy before reading the directions? How has that gone for you? I'll admit, I am often the person who doesn't read instructions and just figures it out as I go. For me, that often ends up with frustration, a lot of wasted time and even tears. (Like I said, I'm not a patient person.) Life is a lot like that, especially when we don't read the instructions.

Luckily, God has laid out his instructions for eternal life so clearly and succinctly in this passage of the Bible: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind and love your neighbor as you love yourself. It's so easy, yet so many of us go through life without following these very simple directions. Let God's clear instruction manual guide you through every conflict, every hardship, every big decision, every storm, and you will have eternal life!

RESPOND

What would our world be like if everyone focused their energy on loving God and their neighbors?



RECITE

Father, etch these instructions into my spirit so I may remember to always love you with all my heart, soul, strength and mind, and to love my neighbor as I love myself so that all may feel your compassion. Amen.

Thursday,
APRIL 2
Rachel Coates

READ

John 13:34-35 (NIV)

REFLECT

Every day, we are confronted by a world defined by division, cruelty, and injustice. Yet, amid this, Jesus doesn't offer us a suggestion – He gives us a command.

Mere hours before he was crucified, Jesus spoke these words, then demonstrated with His life that real love is a model of radical sacrifice. This love requires us to prioritize the needs of others above our own, serving without the expectation of reward. It is a love validated by action, not just eloquence.

In an era where religious success is often measured by political influence or the number of social media likes, Jesus offers a different metric. He suggests that the most undeniable witness to the Gospel is our unity. Our compassion, selfless service, and pursuit of justice are the very things that draw a weary world toward the heart of God.

Jesus loves us unconditionally and was willing to give up his life so that we can have eternal life. This leaves us with a challenging question: Are we willing to embody that same love for our families? How about our neighbor? The stranger on the news or the immigrant in our community?

The call is to move past simple tolerance or agreement and step into Christ-like love: the kind that heals divisions and draws the lost to our Lord and Savior.

RESPOND

Is my love a reflection of Christ's love? Is my love a clear witness? Would the world be convinced that we are followers of Jesus, simply by how we treat each other?

A NEW COMMANDMENT

John 13



RECITE

Lord Jesus, thank you for the radical sacrificial love you have shown to us. Forgive us for the times we have failed to show that same grace and love to those around us. Amen.

Friday,
APRIL 3
Leslie Alexander

READ

John 19:25-27

REFLECT

As Jesus is dying on the cross, He takes a moment to remind us about the sacredness of Family. Jesus asked His disciple John to care for His mother, Mary. John wasn't His biological brother, but John stayed with Him at the cross. He chose John to carry out this assignment because he knew He could trust John. Family is not always blood, but instead are the people we choose, and Jesus chose John.

Jesus did not let His circumstance keep Him from caring for His family. It shows His love, humanity, and represents what the Bible says in the fifth commandment, "Honor your father and your mother..." (Exodus 20:12). He worked to ensure that upon His death, His mother's needs would be met.

I have always loved being with and caring for my family. As my family has grown, as my parents have gotten older, and as I get older, I truly understand the value of family. Years ago, it was hard for me to understand why my Father would want us all to live in a huge home together. I said it was too many people, and I needed my space. I didn't realize he was showing me how much he valued family. As I spend more time with my parents, and live life as an aunt, I have grown to cherish every moment and opportunity that I have to be there and to help care for them. These moments are precious and valuable, and I choose to embrace each one.

RESPOND

How can you show love to your family today?



RECITE

Lord, thank You for your example of compassion even in suffering. Shape us to be people who love and care, even when the cost is great. Amen.

SATURDAY
APRIL
DAY OF
REST

Quiet Reflection

Romans 5:7-11
(The Passion Translation - TPT)

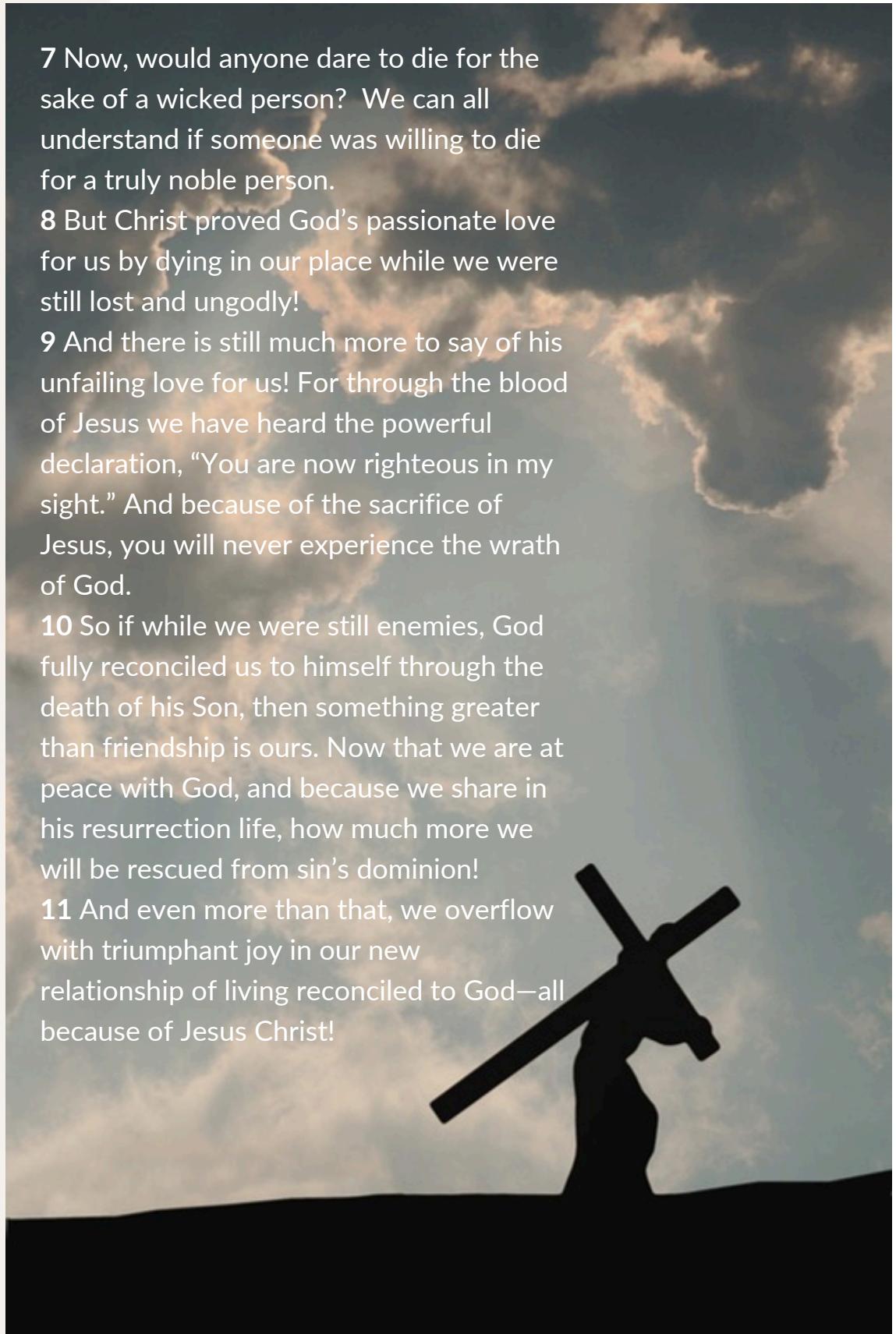
7 Now, would anyone dare to die for the sake of a wicked person? We can all understand if someone was willing to die for a truly noble person.

8 But Christ proved God's passionate love for us by dying in our place while we were still lost and ungodly!

9 And there is still much more to say of his unfailing love for us! For through the blood of Jesus we have heard the powerful declaration, "You are now righteous in my sight." And because of the sacrifice of Jesus, you will never experience the wrath of God.

10 So if while we were still enemies, God fully reconciled us to himself through the death of his Son, then something greater than friendship is ours. Now that we are at peace with God, and because we share in his resurrection life, how much more we will be rescued from sin's dominion!

11 And even more than that, we overflow with triumphant joy in our new relationship of living reconciled to God—all because of Jesus Christ!



Sunday,
APRIL 5
Danielle L. Bridgeforth

READ

Matthew 28:5-7 (NLT)

REFLECT

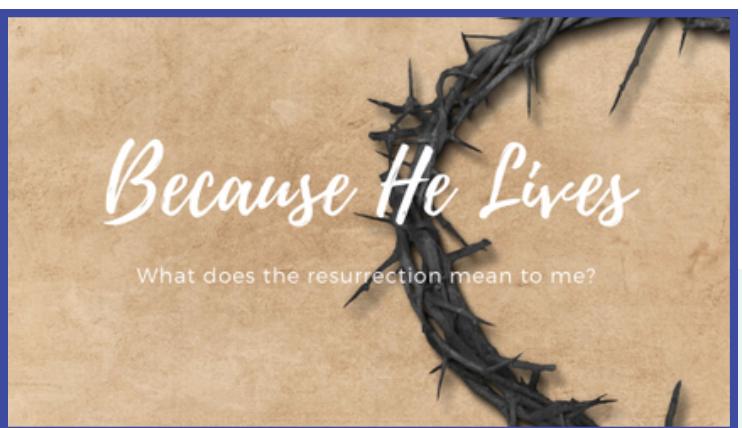
When we began this journey seven weeks ago, I asked you to keep the end in mind. Knowing the ending of a story can sometimes cause us to lose focus or lack attention. Conversely, when we know how the story ends, it frees us to pay more attention to the unfolding storyline. When I know the outcome, I can enjoy the journey more. The destination is secure. So, the ride can be experienced and appreciated more.

Today, as we celebrate **Resurrection Sunday**, let's not only give God praise for the empty tomb and fulfilled promises. Let's also take a few moments to reflect upon the journey that we have just made. How have you grown? What did you learn about yourself? What do you understand better about Jesus? It would do us a disservice if we simply closed this devotional today and never paused to consider what God wants us to take away from the time we have spent with its pages. The real shout of Easter Sunday is not only that Jesus was alive again, but that He **IS** alive right now! How will you embody Christ so that you can prove that He is present and available to everyone each day?

In our passage today, the angel did not merely tell the women that Jesus was risen. The angel also **sent** the women to tell that message to the disciples and to do it **quickly!** The women were to spread the news that Jesus was alive and would meet them at the appointed place. We too must carry the truth of Christ's availability and accessibility to all whom we meet. Let one take away from this year's Lenten Season be a deepened resolve and an urgency to spread the message and the love of Jesus everywhere we go and every chance that we get. He lives!!

RESPOND

What does Jesus being alive mean to you?



RECITE

*He lives! He lives! Christ Jesus lives today!
Amen!*

BECOMING.BETTER.TOGETHER.

Mission: Inviting you to discover Christ and live a life of purpose and passion.

Vision: To be a training ground for God's disciples, preparing us to live out our faith.

Strategy: Worship, Serve, Grow, Connect



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