



JOURNEY TO THE CROSS





GUIDE INFO:

Dear friends,

The booklet that you have in your hands is a great gift, resource and moment for us as a community to come together and centre ourselves around Jesus as we draw closer to the cross.

The hope for this booklet is simple: to lead people closer to Jesus during these next 40 days. In this booklet you will see beautiful & heartfelt prayers, reflections upon scripture, challenges, questions and artwork that point toward Jesus. What a joy it has been for us to see these submissions come in and to learn from one another over these coming days.

Lent, for those unfamiliar with this term, is a season within the Christian Calendar that serve as a 40-day season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. It serves as a reflection of the 40-days Jesus spends praying and fasting in the desert (Mt 4; Mk 1; Lk 4). Between Ash Wednesday (February 18th) and Easter Sunday, Lent is intended to be a period of reflection, repentance and spiritual renewal for followers of Jesus. We invite you into this season.

For some, Lent is a time to give up something. These can be material things, or something internal that we've been wrestling with. For others, Lent is a time to practice something new and to learn new spiritual disciplines along the way. If this is your first Lent, we invite you to simply find 5 or 10 minutes to spend with Jesus and we hope this booklet can be a resource you and your family can use to grow closer to Him.

How To Use This Guide:

- Follow along each day as we approach Easter Sunday. Start on February 18th and continue until April 5th.
- Saturday's serve as a *Sabbath* and as such there are no daily guides to read. Take time each Saturday to rest or to try a new spiritual discipline.
- Write on these guides, ask questions, and have your Bible nearby as you read through this booklet! Take time to pray before entering into each day for the Lord to reveal something new!

Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.

Psalm 105:4





PRAYER

9 *“This, then, is how you should pray:*

*“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,*

*10 your kingdom come,
your will be done,*

on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us today our daily bread.

*12 And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

*13 And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.’*

Matthew 6:9-13





DAY 1

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 18

LUKE 5:16 (NIV)

BUT JESUS OFTEN WITHDREW TO LONELY PLACES AND PRAYED

Jesus prayed... Jesus prayed often. Throughout His life, it is one of the many great examples and gifts Jesus gives us! I am always amazed at how often Jesus retreats to pray, be renewed and prepare Himself before the next miracle, healing, or conversation He has.

Look at Jesus ministry. Even before His first miracle, Jesus retreats to the wilderness for 40 days & 40 nights. As He is tempted, fasting, cold and alone, He prays. He calls out to the Father and the Father listens. Jesus' disciples pick up on this and ask Him how to do this thing? Jesus shows them and does it with grace and love. Finally, near hours before His death, Jesus finds Himself once again in the wilderness - the garden - pleading with the Father to take His burden, take His cup. He doesn't do this once, but three times He goes back and prays.

What a great question for us to wrestle with in this 40 days. How often do we pray? How often do we pray like Jesus - as open, honest and dependent upon it as much as food and water. Take time now and during these next few days to spend time with our Heavenly Father.

**SUBMITTED BY:
PASTOR STEPHEN**





DAY 2

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 19

prayer

" Don't worry about any-
 thing; instead, pray about
 everything. tell God what you
 need, and thank him for ~~all~~
 all he has done." Phil-
 ippians 4:6



SUBMITTED BY:
LEILANI B.



DAY 3

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 20

Prayer

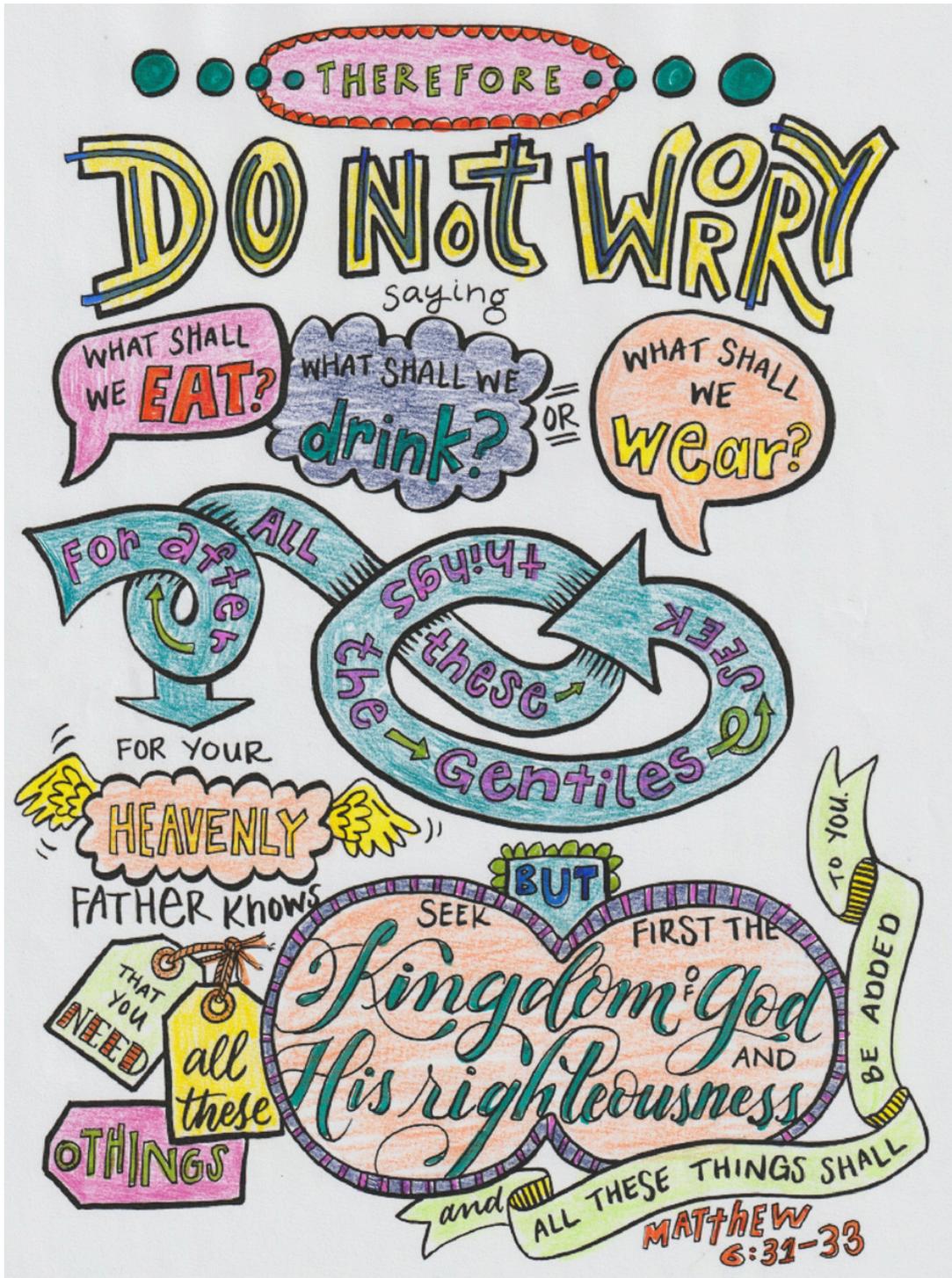
Lord, how incredible it is to know that the one who fully knows our hearts, our struggles, our pain; the one who we can come into a quiet conversation with and bear our souls to is not just another person but is the one true God. You know us through and through. We mess up and yet you still listen. Please help us to seek this extraordinary connection with you first and throughout our days and nights. In Jesus' name we pray, with thanksgiving, Amen

SUBMITTED BY:
RACHAEL D.



DAY 4

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 22



SUBMITTED BY:
MARIS E.





DAY 5

MONDAY FEBRUARY 23

MATTHEW 26:36-46

Pray this prayer: “Heavenly Father, through Your Holy Spirit, help focus my mind and heart on the words and phrases that you want to use to speak to me right now, Amen.”

Read through Matthew 26:36-46 five times

AFTER you’ve read it through five times, write down words or phrases that stick out to you.

Pray this prayer: “Heavenly Father, with the words and phrases that you spoke to me above, clarify in my mind and heart what you are saying to me through them, Amen.”

Using only the words and phrases you wrote down above, what do you find interesting? What questions do you have? What makes you think?

Write down your questions/comments/thoughts.

Pray this prayer: “Heavenly Father, I know that Your word is alive and calls me to respond today. Help me know how I am supposed to live out this passage today, Amen.”

What is God asking you to do today to live out your relationship with Jesus?

What is something really specific and simple that God is asking you to respond with today? Write it down.



SUBMITTED BY:
DAVE Y.



DAY 6

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 24

*Look upon us, O Lord,
and let all the darkness of our souls
vanish before the beams of thy brightness.*

*Fill us with holy love,
and open to us the treasures of thy wisdom.*

*All our desire is known unto thee,
therefore perfect what thou hast begun,
and what thy Spirit has awakened us to ask in
prayer.*

*We seek thy face,
turn thy face unto us and show us thy glory.
Then shall our longing be satisfied,
and our peace shall be perfect.*

EARLY
CHRISTIAN
PRAYER



DAY 7

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 25

Lord, I have wandered from you.

My heart has grown calloused when it should be soft.

My words have cut when they should have healed.

My hands have clutched and grasped when they should
have been open.

My mind has been divided when I should have been sure.

My eyes have been blind when I should have seen.

My spirit has been weak when it should have been willing.

But even now, Lord, I return to you, for I know you are
gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding
in steadfast love. Teach me your ways, Lord, that I may walk
in your truth; let me wholeheartedly revere your name.

Amen.

SUBMITTED BY:
GERRITT H.



DAY 8

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 26



SUBMITTED BY:
LAYLA A.



DAY 9

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 27

As you approach the final day of our week of prayer, reflect upon the role prayer has had in your life this week.

Is this an increase in your normal practice?

Is this new?

How have you heard the voice of the Lord or how have you let the Lord into your wants, desires, hope and needs?

We encourage you to continue to pray as we approach the Cross. May these moments between you and the Lord be a blessing and strengthen your relationship with Him.

Today, listen to Matt Maher's *Lord I Need You*. As you listen, may the words of this song become an anthem on your heart, and a prayer that courses in you throughout your day. We all desperately need Jesus. He should be our example and all we need.

*Lord I need You oh I need You
Every hour I need You
My one defense my righteousness
Oh God how I need You*

SUBMITTED BY:
STEPHEN E.





LOVE IN ACTION

12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. 13 “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

John 13:12-17





DAY 10

SUNDAY MARCH 1

JOHN 13:34–35 (NRSV)

“I GIVE YOU A NEW COMMANDMENT, THAT YOU LOVE ONE ANOTHER. JUST AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, YOU ALSO SHOULD LOVE ONE ANOTHER.”

Love, when lived out, has a way of leading us into uncomfortable places. In John 13, Jesus kneels to wash the feet of His disciples, an act that was awkward and humbling. Jesus does not simply tell His disciples to love. He shows them.

This was love in action. Love that stooped low. Love that required presence, attention, and obedience. I am often challenged by how easily I prefer love that stays within my comfort zone.

During our years as missionaries in South Africa, a local man joined us for small group. Over time, it became clear he was suffering from pain in his leg.

He had seen many doctors, nothing helped, and a private doctor was far beyond what he could afford. One morning, as we watched him walk away from our home, I felt the Lord prompt me to pay for his visit with the money we had set aside for new tires. As missionaries, we were living on the faithful generosity of others, and every expense was carefully weighed. After praying together, my husband and I knew obedience was being asked of us. So, we gave the money away.

The next day, a friend reached out, saying they felt prompted to give us a financial gift. It was the exact amount we had given away. God knew. He always does. All these years later, I am still being formed by that moment. Not because of the outcome, but because love required us to see, to respond, and to trust. I worry that busyness and routine can dull my awareness, keeping me from noticing what God has placed right in front of me.

Love in action does not always look like a grand gesture. More often, it is shaped through a series of everyday moments. Small kindnesses. Quiet obedience. Choosing presence when it would be easier to rush past. These ordinary moments are where love is practiced and formed.

Prayer:

Jesus, You loved us first—fully, humbly, and without holding back. Open our eyes to see the needs around us. Soften our hearts toward obedience, even when it feels uncomfortable.

Teach us to trust that You are already at work,
and to follow You in love that moves, serves, and gives.

Amen.

SUBMITTED BY:
PASTOR MORGAN





DAY 11

MONDAY MARCH 2

*“I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.”*

- Psalm 139:14

Lord, thank you for letting us work with you to share your joy with the world. Help us not take for granted the gift it is to share you gospel to the nations, and to our neighbors. Help us have eyes to see the needs around us and to respond to those needs in joy and hope. Thank you so much Lord for your love and care over us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

SUBMITTED BY:
GREG L.



DAY 12

TUESDAY MARCH 3

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4
“LOVE IS PATIENT...”

Love is patient

Patience is a prime example of love in action. To be patient is to practice love for others, to care enough to let what works best for them override what we want.

After all, where would we be without the patience of God's gracious love?

SUBMITTED BY:
SANDRA H.



DAY 13

WEDNESDAY MARCH 4

“WE LOVE BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US.”

1 JOHN 4:19

Love is more than just saying kind words. Love is also something that we do. Jesus showed us love by helping others, caring for the sick, forgiving people, and dying on the cross for our sins. During Lent we can practice putting our love into action by sharing, helping without being asked, using kind words when we speak, praying for people in need, and forgiving others. Every time we choose to love like Jesus, we are showing God’s love to people.

Questions:

What is one kind thing we can do today or this week to show God’s love to someone else?

Family Prayer:

Dear Jesus, Thank you for loving us so much. Thank you for showing us what real love looks like. Help our family not just to say loving words, but to show love in our actions towards each other. Teach us to be kind, patient, loving, gentle and forgiving every day. Help us to share your love with others.

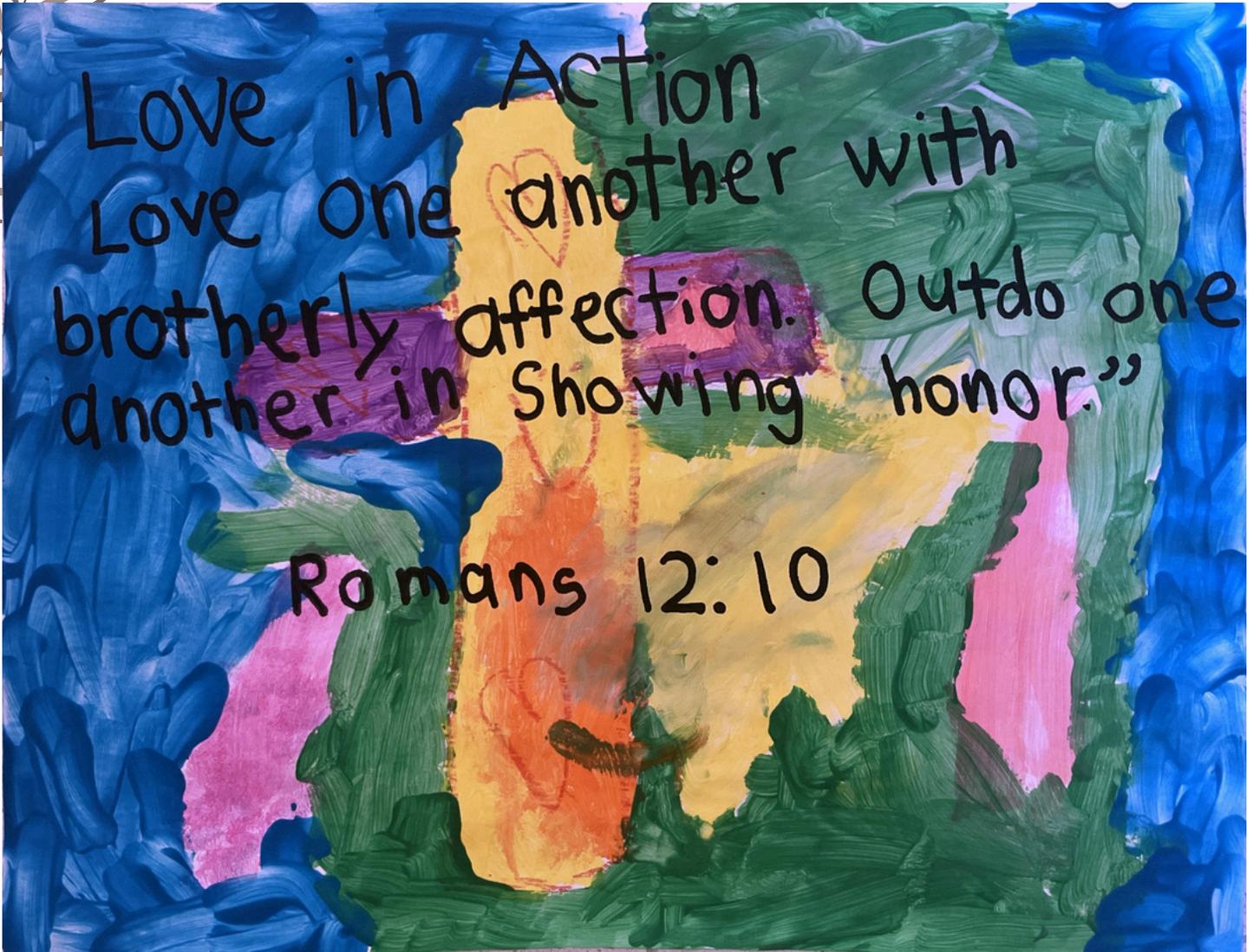
Amen.

SUBMITTED BY:
ROBIN B.



DAY 14

THURSDAY MARCH 5



Prayer Prompt:

Ask God to show you one place this week where He is inviting you to practice love in action—especially where it may stretch you.



SUBMITTED BY:
LEILANI B.



DAY 15

FRIDAY MARCH 6

John 13 is such a beautiful passage of scripture. As Jesus was culminating His time in Ministry, He was intentional about what He was going to do that night. “Jesus knew that His hour had come....having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.... and knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper, and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself and... began to wash the disciples’ feet.” verses 1-5.

His heart was so full of love for His Father and love for His disciples, and He overflowed that love into serving them. He later goes on to say, “I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you... a servant is not greater than his master, nor is he who is sent greater than He who sent him.”verse 16 and also, “a new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” verse 34.

Recently I’ve been reflecting on the life of Mother Teresa. As I read her autobiography her missional conviction stood out to me. Early on in life she had a growing desire to serve God as a Nun and to give Him her whole life, but it was on a train in India when God met her in a vision and showed her Jesus at the well meeting the Samaritan Woman in John 4, and He was saying to the woman, “I thirst.” Immediately a deep conviction grew in Mother Teresa, Jesus was longing for people, and we are longing for Jesus. As she was reaching the thirst in the poorest people of India, she was also meeting the desire in Jesus for them. It’s like Psalm 42 says, “deep calls unto deep at the roar of your waterfalls.” She connected with this deep desire in the hearts of people and this deep desire in the Heart of God.

It's easy to stay in our comfortable bubbles and avoid looking in the eyes of someone in need, but when I read of Jesus, full of love, about to lay His life down for us, washing the feet of the ones He loved, and of Mother Teresa willing to lay everything down so she could minister to the poor and outcast and value them as humans. I am stirred again to ask God to open the eyes of my heart and to give me courage and desire to notice the "one" in front of me and to love them with that same kind of love.

Who is that person in front of you today? Maybe they are outcast, poor, overlooked, broken, and your initial reaction would be to look away. Maybe today God can give you the courage to look at them with a deeper love that wants to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

Let's pray. Lord Jesus, remind me of the way You would sit down and wash our feet today. Open the eyes of my heart to see You, laying down Your life, full of love, and reaching out to give me new life. May I be one, full of that love, to notice someone You've placed in front of me. When I see them, fill me with that same conviction to see them the way You see them. Amen

SUBMITTED BY:
SERENA S.





FASTING

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

Matthew 4:1-2





DAY 16

SUNDAY MARCH 8

The practice of fasting is one that originated a long time before health “gurus” put “intermittent” before it and made it trendy. It originated not so us as over-consuming Westerners can lose those extra 10 pounds, but because the Creator of mankind understood the benefits of surrendering our stomachs to Jesus. We see Biblical figures such as Moses, David, Esther, Daniel, Paul and of course Jesus all partaking in this practice. It’s one of those things that we read about, but often overlook because of the un-comfortability of it. It’s one of those practices that is quite easy to skip, because it’s so countercultural to what we see around us. Food is quick, accessible and often the thing we turn to simply because we’re bored.

However, Scripture is quite clear about fasting. It is not just an ancient practice to be forgotten about because of the New Covenant. If we desire to become like Jesus, we must look intently at what he valued and practiced. Of course, Jesus fasted for 40 days (hello, lent!) before beginning his ministry. But when he taught about fasting in Matthew 6:16, he didn’t preface it with “if you fast,” he said “when you fast.” There is an assumption that followers of Jesus will fast regularly. And yet, many of us don’t.

Fasting can be a powerful window into our heart of hearts, revealing things about us that we didn’t know lingered deep down. It can also be a powerful way to connect with the heart of God, as we are constantly reminded of our dependence on Him every time our stomach growls. At times when we would normally eat, we can actually take that time to be intentional with Jesus, and sit at His feet, read His word, and hear His voice.

I once did a 4-day fast while in Bible College, and I expected to feel the best I ever felt! I thought I would be so close to the heart of God, in tune with His voice like never before. However, I found myself more angry than I've ever been. I was short with those around me, and overall upset that I "couldn't" eat. I had no idea how much of my satisfaction and joy in life came from food, and not from God. I was delighting in something that God gives, not in God Himself. It was only because I fasted that I had this revelation.

Fasting is powerful, and expected of us as followers of Jesus. My encouragement is to take one day this week and fast. I suggest doing a sundown to sundown fast (say Saturday night until Sunday night), and break the fast with a meal with those close to you. If you can't do a day, try one meal. Say you don't eat lunch one day this week, and instead spend that half hour praying, reading Scripture, just being with Jesus.

See how it realigns your heart with His, and see if the Holy Spirit is pointing anything out in you that needs correction. And know that this is not done out of a place of performance, or because we are trying to fit into our jeans. It is because we want to be like and be with Jesus!

May the grace of God spur you on towards His heart as you reflect on what fasting means, and as you look to apply this practice to your life.



**SUBMITTED BY:
PASTOR BRANDT**



DAY 17

MONDAY MARCH 9

“Look at all the pretty things that steal my heart away, I can feel I’m fading. Cause Lord I love so many things that keep me from your face, come and save,” song by Tenth Avenue North.

“Christian fasting at its root, is the hunger of a homesickness for God,” John Piper wrote in “A Hunger for God.”

There are many distractions in our daily lives that pull us away from the Creator; many promises of fulfillment and satisfaction to relieve us from our emptiness. When we fast, we choose to remain physically empty of whatever we have been filling ourselves with (food, social media, sweets, coffee, television, the news) and we leave that space open for the Holy Spirit to meet us in. It’s uncomfortable, but as we deny ourselves we give the reins back over to God and in return receive His nourishment. He gives the grace, comfort, and fulfillment no food or substance can give.

Guide:

- Ask Holy Spirit: “What should I fast from? I want to have a deeper relationship with you. I want the blinders I have to be lifted. I want barriers between us to be removed. What tangible thing would be best to deny myself of?” Allow quiet and write down what comes to mind. You can listen with someone you trust or run it by someone as well if you’re unsure.

- During Lent (Feb 18 - Apr 2) fast! Carry through life as you normally have as you fast. No need to complain or tell whoever you see what you’re doing - this is between you and God.

SUBMITTED BY:
PAYDEN &
JOEL U.



DAY 18

TUESDAY MARCH 10



For some reason, God chose the action of fasting to draw us closer to Him. To close out the noise of all that is around us so that our focus on Him is laser sharp. There is something about denying ourselves that is deeply powerful and connects us to God. Take time to fast and pray. Even if that is a short time or a longer period. Trust and see that God will meet you there.

Read Matthew 6:17-18 & Matthew 4:4

SUBMITTED BY:
AUDRA C.



DAY 19

WEDNESDAY MARCH 11

Fasting - Making Room for God

“You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart.”

Jeremiah 29:13

During Lent, many people practice fasting every year. Fasting means choosing to give up something for a little while – like chocolate, candy, social media, movies or watching TV – to help us focus more on God. It is not about being uncomfortable. It is about joyfully making more space in our hearts, minds and lives for God. When we fast we can use that time to pray, read the Bible, ask Him to help us grow in love and remember how much we need Jesus.

Questions:

What is something small we could give up this week to spend more time with God?
How will we use that time to focus on God instead?

Family Prayer:

Dear Jesus, Thank you for always being with us. During this season of Lent, help us learn to make room in hearts and minds for you every day. When we fast from something we like, remind us to think about you and talk to you instead. Help our family to grow closer to You and to each other. We love you
Jesus, thank you for loving us just as we are.

Amen.

SUBMITTED BY:
MELISSA B.





DAY 20

THURSDAY MARCH 12

Isaiah 58 lays out the heart of God's chosen fast. It's not just about ourselves, but others too.

Fasting in the biblical sense is often a way to express godly sorrow. Nehemiah, King David, the prophet Daniel, and others turned to fasting because of repentance and mourning.

Their prayer wasn't: dear Lord, please bless me to make me stronger and greater...

No, God's servants were ready to sacrifice anything to be in the mere presence of God; to cry out and intercede on behalf of others, for repentance and salvation of immortal souls.

Matthew 6:16-18 also talks about fasting with the right heart. It's not a show for others or for personal gain. Fasting should be done in secret, between you and God, with an attitude of humility and submission.





RETURNING TO THE FATHER

17 *“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! 18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ 20 So he got up and went to his father.*

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

21 *“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’*

22 *“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. 24 For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.*

Luke 15:17-24





DAY 22

SUNDAY MARCH 15

Returning to the Father

“I and the Father are one.” John 10:30

Jesus’ words in John 10:30 are incredibly simple: “I and the Father are one.” He isn’t just making a theological statement, He’s showing us what God is actually like. To know Jesus is to know the Father. And if we’re honest... don’t we all go through seasons where we drift a bit? Where we’re not as close as we once were? So what do we do when that happens? How do we course-correct and start walking closely with Jesus again? When we think about the idea of turning our hearts back towards Jesus, it can sound like a long climb - like we need to fix ourselves first, get disciplined again, clean things up spiritually before we can approach Him. But that’s not the story Jesus tells. In Christ, God has already come toward us. In your sin, in your shame, in your suffering, Jesus leaves the comfort of heaven to come to you. He pursues you. In Luke 15 we see the story of the Prodigal Son and a father that is waiting with open arms for his child to return. I and the Father are one. Jesus’ coming to rescue us is the heart of the Father. He is a God that pursues His people and is there at all times for His children. No matter where you are at and what you are facing you can turn to Him at anytime, in any place, even in the depths of shame, lack of faith, or apathy, and Jesus will be ready to meet.

SUBMITTED BY:
PASTOR TREVOR



DAY 23

MONDAY MARCH 16

So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him”

Luke 15:20



SUBMITTED BY:
ELORA B.



DAY 24

TUESDAY MARCH 17

When we run to God, we find a Father with open arms. And it's in His open arms of love, grace, and mercy that we'll find everything we need. He doesn't bring shame or condemnation down upon us. He doesn't embarrass us.

God desires to look us in the eyes and tell us with a voice of love and kindness,
“Welcome home.”

I love the parable of the prodigal son because it shows us this very truth. While the son had run away, wasted his inheritance, and hoped his dad might let him come back home to at least work as a servant; the father had been waiting with open arms. Luke 15:20-24 (MSG) shows us...

“When he was still a long way off, his father saw him. His heart pounding, he ran out, embraced him, and kissed him. The son started his speech: ‘Father, I’ve sinned against God, I’ve sinned before you; I don’t deserve to be called your son ever again.’

“But the father wasn’t listening. He was calling to the servants, ‘Quick. Bring a clean set of clothes and dress him. Put the family ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Then get a grain-fed heifer and roast it. We’re going to feast! We’re going to have a wonderful time! My son is here—given up for dead and now alive! Given up for lost and now found!’ And they began to have a wonderful time.”

Is there a need in your life today? I want to encourage you to run to the Father. His arms are open, and He's ready to give you everything you need and more.



DAY 25

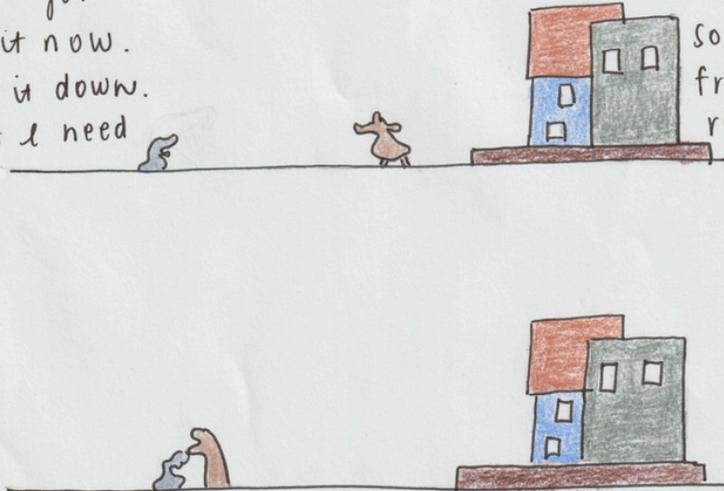
WEDNESDAY MARCH 18

RUN TO THE FATHER

by: Cody Carnes

I've carried a burden
for too long on my own.
I wasn't created
to bear it alone.
I hear your invitation
to let it all go.
Yeah, I see it now.
I'm laying it down.
+ I know that I need
You.

I run to the Father.
I fall into grace.
I'm done with the
hiding, no reason to
wait. My heart
needs a surgeon. My
soul needs a
friend. So I'll
run to the
Father AGAIN +
AGAIN!



You saw my condition,
had a plan from the
start. Your son for
redemption, the price of
my heart. I don't have
a context for that kind
of love. I don't understand,
can't comprehend. I know that
I need you!

My heart has been in
your sights, long before
my first breath. I feel
this rush, deep in my
chest. Your mercy is
calling out. Just as I
am, you pull me in.
I know that I need
you!

SUBMITTED BY:
MARIS E.



DAY 26

THURSDAY MARCH 19

Let's pray,

As I draw near again, pull me close. Take me by the hand and tell me not to fear. Even now, Lord, I return to you, with all my heart. Through the blood of Jesus, make me clean.

In fasting and mourning I tear my heart and lay the pieces at the cross, for I know that you are gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and overflowing with steadfast love.

Create in me a clean heart, and renew a steadfast spirit within me, and as I humble myself, I trust you will lift me up, for I know you care for me.

Your steadfast love is better than life, and I praise you.

Amen.

SUBMITTED BY:
GERRITT H.



DAY 27

FRIDAY MARCH 20

Opening

There's a difference between drifting and walking away. Drifting feels accidental. Walking away feels intentional. And Hosea is written to people who didn't just drift—they pursued other loves. Other securities. Other saviors. Yet the heart of this passage is not accusation. It's invitation: "Return."

Not: Fix yourself. Not: Pay Me back. Not: Prove you've changed.

Just: Come back.

The Call to Return

"Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God. Your sins have been your downfall!"

(Hosea 14:1)

God names the problem—but He doesn't slam the door. He doesn't say, "You made a choice." He says, "Come home." Notice something beautiful: the word return assumes relationship. You can't return to someone you never belonged to. The Father is not calling strangers. He's calling His own.

Reflection questions:

Where have I looked for security apart from God?

Have I mistaken distance from God as disqualification from Him?

Prayer

Father, I confess the places I have looked for life apart from You. I bring You my words - my honesty, my weakness, my need. Heal my wandering heart. Teach me to rest in Your love that is given freely, not earned. Thank

You that I can return - not as a stranger, but as Yours.

Amen.

SUBMITTED BY:
**ANDREW &
EVERETT D.**





HOPE IN OUR WEAKNESS

25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; 26 and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

John 11:25





DAY 28

SUNDAY MARCH 22

Jesus said to her. *“I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”*

- John 11:25

Jesus answered, *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*

- John 14

Our world is constantly pushing us to prove ourselves, telling us that all that we can accomplish on our own strength is all that we are. Our hope then comes from own ability to overcome our own weakness. To pick ourselves up off the mat like Rocky Balboa every time life knocks us down and keep fighting until we’ve proven our own strength and everyone forgets that we were weak enough to be knocked down in the first place. Hope is thus directly correlated to what I can accomplish when I put my mind to it. It comes from what I can become in my career, the following I have online, the causes I have championed, the success of my children, the cleanliness of my house, the car that I drive, the things people say about me, and on the list goes.

But any hope that we place in our own strength is a hope that is finite. There is always an end to what I am capable of. One of the beautiful twists of the Good News of Jesus is that we are called to be a part of an Upside-Down Kingdom in which we are called, not just to admit our own weakness, but to find hope in our weakness.

Hope in our weakness does not mean finding hope in our ability to overcome weakness. It means accepting our weaknesses and understanding our need to place our hope in something beyond ourselves. Jesus invites us to abandon the finite pursuit of hope in our own strength and find our infinite hope in He who overcomes all things—the one who is the way, the truth, and the life.

Edward Mote sums up our hope in his hymn *The Solid Rock*.

“My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand.
All other ground is sinking sand.

**SUBMITTED BY:
PASTOR MATT**





DAY 29

MONDAY MARCH 23

2 Corinthians 12:9: But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me."

This is the verse that always comes up when we search the Word for answers to understand what to do when we are going through hard moments or struggles we do not feel strong enough to deal with. Sometimes we may find it doesn't provide any comfort or what we really want to hear. So we pray. For Jesus to remove what we are going through. To provide an easier path to walk on. Sometimes maybe even asking or demanding to know, "why?" Our focus shifts from Jesus to ourselves, and soon we are sitting in our weakness, looking down and feeling defeated.

We are surrounded by many messages in this world that tell us, "do what we feel" and reinforces that it is okay to stay in our feelings and not move. I heard the saying once, "We steer where we stare." We focus on our feelings. We stay in our weakness.

We rely on ourselves. Too tired to get up. Too defeated to keep going. And not remembering who our hope is.

How we feel does not equal our faith. Faith is trusting in who we know Jesus is, His character and His promises. It is a conscious decision to change our focus from our feelings to the One our faith is in. Sometimes we need to say it out loud so that we can hear the words that Jesus is our living hope, and realize that He has been sitting with us in our weakness. Jesus is our anchor, the One who strengthens us, who makes a way and provides all we need. He is the source of our hope and fills us with peace. We never walk alone and Paul encourages us in Romans 15:13: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

There is always hope. His name is Jesus.

SUBMITTED BY:
JEN M.



DAY 30

TUESDAY MARCH 24



Romans 15:13 ~ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

SUBMITTED BY:
FINN M.





DAY 31

WEDNESDAY MARCH 25

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

BUT HE SAID TO ME, “MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU, FOR MY POWER IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS.” THEREFORE I WILL BOAST ALL THE MORE GLADLY ABOUT MY WEAKNESSES, SO THAT CHRIST’S POWER MAY REST ON ME.

Weakness... we all have it. Each of us in different areas. We get frustrated by it. We let it get us down and discouraged. But what if we turned that around? What if we got excited about our weakness? What if we just couldn't wait to see how God might show up or work through or in spite of our weakness to show His glory? Can we just imagine how our perspective would change if we embraced our weaknesses in that way! What kind of awe & hope we would have. Amazing.

Scriptures To Explore:

2 Corinthians 12:9

Isaiah 40:19

Isaiah 41:10

Psalm 73:26

SUBMITTED BY:
AUDRA C.





DAY 32

THURSDAY MARCH 26

Recently there was a night where overwhelming sadness, fear, anger, and hopelessness, nearly claimed the life of a loved one. That night and the following days felt so heavy and difficult. We were grateful that we didn't lose her, but our hearts still struggled with the weight of what nearly consumed her. I thought of reaching out to friends who were aware of our situation to ask for their prayers, but to be honest, I felt so weary of asking yet again when we had all been praying for her for so long. My thoughts started down into a valley of hopelessness. As I sat, reflecting on all of the recent events, a song came to my mind. It is one that we often sing around Easter time. The chorus and the bridge say:

*Friday's good cause Sunday is coming
Don't lose hope cause Sunday is coming
Devil you're done you better start running
Friday's good cause Sunday is coming
Then He breathed His Last
And bowed His head
The Son of God
And man was dead
With bloody hands
Tears on their face
They laid Him down
Inside the grave
That wasn't the end
That wasn't the end
That wasn't the end*

Let me tell you what happened next...

In that moment, I felt my soul cry out that the devil did not win, and that he would never win; That Jesus overcame death and his work is not finished. Since then I felt lifted up, my strength returned and my heart was encouraged again to keep fighting for her in prayer, and to ask for other believers to join me in fighting for her. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. Romans 5:2-5

**SUBMITTED BY:
RACHAEL D.**



DAY 33

FRIDAY MARCH 27



Reflection Scripture:

Read Matthew 26 as Jesus approaches His final night and His prayer in the Garden. Respond in prayer with our Heavenly Father

SUBMITTED BY:
ALEX





PALM SUNDAY & HOLY WEEK

*12 The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. 13 They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting,
“Hosanna!”*

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Blessed is the king of Israel!”

14 Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written:

*15 “Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion;
see, your king is coming,
seated on a donkey’s colt.”*

John 12:12-16



DAY 34

SUNDAY MARCH 29

If you are familiar with the Christian Calendar and the rhythms of it, you'll likely know that today is the start of "Holy Week". Simply put, Holy Week is the week we recall the events, stories, and examples of Jesus' life as he approaches the Cross in His final week. It begins with His "Triumphal Entry" into Jerusalem where the Jews declared "Hosannah, Hosannah" as He enters the city.

Jesus' example continues His time with the disciples in the Upper Room - where He blesses them with the example of Communion and commissions them to Love as He loved them - washing their feet as an act of servanthood.

Finally, as we approach "Good Friday", we see the painful night in the Garden, followed by an unfair trial, beatings, and finally the death of a criminal as He is hung on the cross.

Why does Jesus do all of this? Because He loves us. Because He cares for you and for me. Because He came to save the world by defeating sin and conquering death...

And He does! He rises again in one week's time. And yet we remember the journey as He approaches the cross this week...

SUBMITTED BY:
STEPHEN E.



DAY 35

MONDAY MARCH 30



SUBMITTED BY:
PAMELA H.



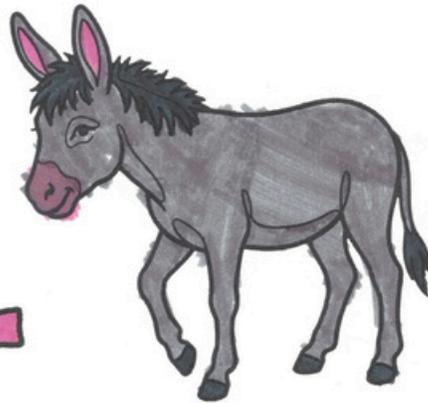
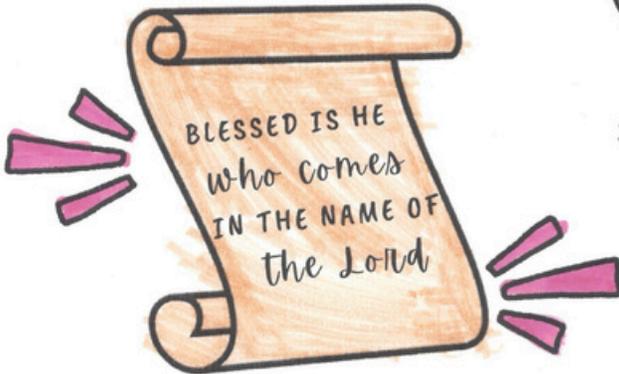
DAY 36

TUESDAY MARCH 31

HOSANNA



TO THE Son of David!



Hosanna

IN THE

HIGHEST!



Matthew 21:9

SUBMITTED BY:
JORDAN D.





DAY 37

WEDNESDAY APRIL 1

Brian Doerksen's, *Hope of the Nations*, was a staple in my church growing up and it quickly became a fan favourite. The lyrics are simple, the melodies aren't overly special, and it is a song filled with the truth and hope that Jesus is all we need! Here are the profound lyrics:

*Jesus, hope of the nations
Jesus, comfort for all who mourn
You are the source of Heaven's hope on earth*

*Jesus, light in the darkness
Jesus, truth in each circumstance
You are the source of Heaven's light on earth*

*In history You lived and died
You broke the chains, You rose to life*

*You are the hope living in us
You are the rock in whom we trust
You are the light shining for all the world to see*

*You rose from the dead conquering fear
Our Prince of Peace drawing us near
Jesus our hope, living for all who will receive
Lord, we believe*

I think we could all use a little more hope. Hope in the moments we are weak and fall. Hope for our nations as tensions have never seemed so high in recent years. Hope that Jesus truly did live and died, and rose to life again. What a great reminder when we have moments of weakness to turn to Him.

As we approach easter, listen to Doerksen's *Hope of the Nations* and allow it to become an anthem on your heart.

SUBMITTED BY:
STEPHEN E.



DAY 38

THURSDAY APRIL 2



Reflection Question:

What comforts, routines, or distractions might be keeping me from truly seeing the people God has placed in front of me?



SUBMITTED BY:
ELORA B.



DAY 39

FRIDAY APRIL 3

Good Friday brings us to the heart of our faith and one of its heaviest moments. We are taught from an early age that Jesus died for our sins. These words are familiar and foundational, yet familiarity can sometimes soften their weight. I'll be honest. I have a tendency to rush past the grief, the sadness, and the uncomfortable. But as I grow older and life has carried more weight, I have learned that leaning into grief and allowing it to exist is still uncomfortable but necessary.

On this day, we do not rush past the cross. We stay. We remember that Jesus was mocked, beaten, and crucified. At the ninth hour, he cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" The Son of God, who healed the sick and calmed storms, fully entered human suffering and death. Some days, I struggle to sit here with Him. The silence can feel heavy and lonely. Yet perhaps that is the point. Our own weakness reminds us that we need His presence more than we realize.

As Christians, we know what is coming. Resurrection is real. Hope is certain. But Good Friday reminds us that hope is not shallow optimism. It is born out of death. Paul writes, "If we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his" (Romans 6:5). Hope is not always loud or quick. Often it is quiet and steady, slowly taking root in the heart, even in the middle of sorrow.

Good Friday ends in silence, but it is not empty. The cross holds grief, yet also gently reminds us that God is faithful, even when we cannot yet see the resurrection.

Prayer Prompt

Jesus, today we come to the cross with honesty. We bring our grief, our questions, and our silence. Help us not to rush past the pain. Teach us to sit with You, to listen to Your words, and to trust Your faithfulness. Thank You for meeting us in suffering and for the hope You have secured for us. Amen.

Reflection Questions

- What emotions surface as you sit with Jesus' cry from the cross?
 - Where might God be inviting you to grieve honestly instead of rushing to hope?
- How does the quiet faithfulness of God's hope shape the way you face suffering and loss?
- Which Scripture in this devotional speaks to you most today, and why?

**SUBMITTED BY:
MORGAN M.**



DAY 40

SATURDAY APRIL 4



SUBMITTED BY:
PAMELA H.





HE HAS RISEN

SUNDAY APRIL 5

*On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. 5 In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? 6 **He is not here; he has risen!** Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 7 ‘The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’ ” 8 Then they remembered his words.*

Luke 24:1-8

He Has Risen! He Has Risen Indeed! Jesus has defeated sin and death and rose from the grave! Hallelujah, what a day for us to celebrate!

