

STUDY GUIDE

Christians often don't like to talk about our sins and our need for repentance, but the need for our own renewal and the renewal of all things is a foundational piece of the Gospel of Jesus. Lent is a season that invites us to "recapture our love for God and his kingdom and cast off those things that so easily entangle us."

This season of Lent, let's step into a journey of transformation as we encounter God and His grace through the spiritual disciplines of fasting, prayer, charity, renewal, and confession. We will find that we have opened ourselves up to the transformative work of the Spirit in our lives, moving our faith from an idea we contemplate to a life we live with Jesus.

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HOW TO USE THIS CURRICULUM

This book was created as a companion guide to the Sunday teaching series, *Realistic Rhythms of Grace*. In it, you will find passages of scripture that pertain to the week's Sunday message, as well as spiritual practices that promote relationship building between you and God, and between you and your community circle.

If you miss a Sunday gathering, you can listen to messages on your favorite podcast platform or directly from our website.

The content in this book is designed as a tool to aid you in the process of reflecting on the weekly Sunday message and giving it time to settle deeper. We do this by slowing down to study scripture, and stepping into practices of spiritual formation that lead to outward action.

All passages of scripture found in this book are in the New Living Translation (NLT), unless noted.

WHAT YOU'LL EXPERIENCE:

- **Day 1:** Read a brief overview of the week's teaching for context.
- **Day 2:** Read/study that week's primary scripture passage, using provided prompts for reflection.
- **Day 3:** Read/study that week's supporting scripture passage, using provided prompts for reflection.
- Day 4: Engage in a spiritual discipline



WEEK 1: MESSAGE NOTES

TEACHER:

Day 1: What is Lent?

Lent is one of five liturgical seasons the church worldwide joins together to practice the spiritual disciplines of fasting, prayer, charity, renewal, and confession for forty days. The early church created Lent for three reasons: preparation of new converts for baptism, a pathway to recommitting to Christ, and a call for the whole church to repent and renew its commitment to Christ.

The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Easter Sunday. Christians have remembered for fifteen hundred years the words, "Remember that we are dust and dust we will return." These words are combined with using ashes, dipping our fingers into the ash, and creating a smudge on our foreheads with the cross sign. The words 'you are dust and dust you will return' allude to when God admonished Adam and Eve as they left paradise in the Book of Genesis.

Lent leads us on a journey of remembering our limited time on earth and renewing our relationship with Jesus, prioritizing our relationship with him, and focusing more fully on him.

Day 2: Scripture

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

If possible, find a quiet and comfortable place. Become aware of God's presence and ask him to open your heart to his Word before you begin to read.

Matthew 3:1-15

¹ In those days John the Baptist came to the Judean wilderness and began preaching. His message was, ² "Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near." ³ The prophet Isaiah was speaking about John when he said,

"He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the LORD's coming!

Clear the road for him!"

⁴ John's clothes were woven from coarse camel hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁵ People from Jerusalem and from all of Judea and all over the Jordan Valley went out to see and hear John. ⁶ And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River.

⁷ But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to watch him baptize, he denounced them. "You brood of snakes!" he exclaimed. "Who warned you to flee the coming wrath? ⁸ Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. ⁹ Don't just say to each other, 'We're safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.' That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones. ¹⁰ Even now the ax of God's judgment is poised, ready to sever the roots of the trees. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ "I baptize with water those who repent of their sins and turn to God. But someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I'm not worthy even to be his slave and carry his sandals. He will

baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹² He is ready to separate the chaff from the wheat with his winnowing fork. Then he will clean up the threshing area, gathering the wheat into his barn but burning the chaff with never-ending fire."

¹³ Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ But John tried to talk him out of it. "I am the one who needs to be baptized by you," he said, "so why are you coming to me?"

¹⁵ But Jesus said, "It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires." So John agreed to baptize him.

- 1. Use your senses to interact with the scene, the environment, and the people. What do you see, hear, taste, smell and touch?
- 2. Highlight the words "repent" and "turn." How have you encountered God's grace in your own repentance and turning?

Day 3: Scripture

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

If possible, find a quiet and comfortable place. Become aware of God's presence and ask him to open your heart to his Word before you begin to read.

The prophecy read yesterday in Matthew 3:3 comes from Isaiah 40:

Isaiah 40 (NIV)

- ¹ Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
- ² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.
- ³ A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
- ⁴ Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.
- 5 And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together.
 For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."
 6 A voice says, "Cry out."
 And I said, "What shall I cry?"

- "All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field.
- ⁷ The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass.
- ⁸ The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever."
- 9 You who bring good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain.
 You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout,
 lift it up, do not be afraid;
 say to the towns of Judah,
 "Here is your God!"
- See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm.See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.
- He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

Reread Isaiah 40 again and reflect as you read:

- 1. What are the people like, and what is their faithfulness like?
- 2. What is God like?
- 3. How have you similarly encountered his grace?

Day 4: Reflect

As we have learned Lent is a season of renewal. Over the next several weeks you will be introduced to several Christian spiritual practices that will help you draw closer to God. We will learn about fasting, prayer, charity, renewal, and confession. These practices are not an end in themselves but simple tools used throughout history for followers of Jesus to create space within their lives to encounter God's grace. Before you start your Lent journey with the aim of making space in your life to encounter Jesus over these next several weeks. consider these reflection questions:

- 1. When have you felt God's grace towards you in the past?
- 2. In what ways do you think you can draw near to God over the next several weeks?
- 3. What reservations do you have about Lent?

As you write down your answers to these questions, bring them to God in prayer.



WEEK 2: MESSAGE NOTES

TEACHER:

Day 1: Fasting

There is no single way to practice Lent that is the "right" way. What is important is that we are making time to grow closer to God, allowing our roots to go deep by challenging the areas of our lives that need less so that we can have more of God's presence. The spiritual discipline of fasting is motivated by remembering Christ's death by choosing to put to death the desires that entangle us—emptying of self to create space with Jesus.

We let go of the time spent preparing and partaking in food or time spent on other activities to return and renew our relationship with God. The literal definition of fasting is refraining from a particular food or drink during a specific time frame and duration. Still, many traditions also include setting aside time used by consumers for social media, listening to the radio, or another identified area. If you can fast from food, we encourage you to choose a specific food, drink, or meal time to fast for the forty days of Lent, breaking on Sundays. But recognize what will be best for you and your health. Alternative ways to fast can be refraining from spending money outside of basic needs, abstaining from social media, or watching TV.

Choosing what to fast is best determined by reflecting on what would point you to understanding your identity in Christ. A conversation with your pastor, a trusted leader, or a spiritual director to identify the motivation to help you grow spiritually is deeply valuable.

* If health conditions prevent you from fasting (food), or if you're grappling with disordered eating, we strongly suggest you refrain from this type of fast. Our inability to fast doesn't define our love for God. Fasting doesn't earn us anything from God; rather, our lives in Christ are a result of God's grace.

Day 2: Scripture

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

If possible, find a quiet and comfortable place. Become aware of God's presence and ask him to open your heart to his Word before you begin to read.

Matthew 3:16-4:11

- ¹⁶ After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy."
- ¹ Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. ² For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry.
- ³ During that time the devil came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread." ⁴ But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."
- ⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, ⁶ and said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say,'He will order his angels to protect you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone."
- ⁷ Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the LORD vour God.'"
- ⁸ Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ "I will give it all to you," he said, "if you will kneel down and worship me."

¹⁰ "Get out of here, Satan," Jesus told him. "For the Scriptures say, 'You must worship the LORD your God and serve only him." ¹¹ Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.

1. Use your senses to interact with this passage. What do you see, hear, taste, smell and touch?

Day 3: Scripture

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

If possible, find a quiet and comfortable place. Become aware of God's presence and ask him to open your heart to his Word before you begin to read.

Deuteronomy 8:1-18

¹ "Be careful to obey all the commands I am giving you today. Then you will live and multiply, and you will enter and occupy the land the Lord swore to give your ancestors. ² Remember how the Lord your God led you through the wilderness for these forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, and to find out whether or not you would obey his commands. ³ Yes, he humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. He did it to teach you that people do not live by bread alone; rather, we live by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. ⁴ For all these forty years your clothes didn't wear out, and your feet didn't blister or swell. ⁵ Think about it: Just as a parent disciplines a child, the Lord your God disciplines you for your own good.

⁶ "So obey the commands of the Lord your God by walking in his ways and fearing him. ⁷ For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land of flowing streams and pools of water, with fountains and springs that gush out in the valleys and hills. ⁸ It is a land of wheat and barley; of grapevines, fig trees, and pomegranates; of olive oil and honey. ⁹ It is a land where food is plentiful and nothing is lacking. It is a land where iron is as common as stone, and copper is abundant in the hills. ¹⁰ When you have eaten your fill, be sure to praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you.

¹¹ "But that is the time to be careful! Beware that in your plenty you do not forget the Lord your God and disobey his commands, regulations, and decrees that I am giving you today. ¹² For when you have become full and prosperous and have built fine homes to live in, ¹³ and when your flocks and herds have become very large and your silver and gold have multiplied

along with everything else, be careful! ¹⁴ Do not become proud at that time and forget the Lord your God, who rescued you from slavery in the land of Egypt. ¹⁵ Do not forget that he led you through the great and terrifying wilderness with its poisonous snakes and scorpions, where it was so hot and dry. He gave you water from the rock! ¹⁶ He fed you with manna in the wilderness, a food unknown to your ancestors. He did this to humble you and test you for your own good. ¹⁷ He did all this so you would never say to yourself, 'I have achieved this wealth with my own strength and energy.' ¹⁸ Remember the Lord your God. He is the one who gives you power to be successful, in order to fulfill the covenant he confirmed to your ancestors with an oath.

- 1. Highlight or underline the answers to the following prompts. In what ways did God humble and test his people? What was God's purpose for humbling and testing?
- 2. What are we inclined to do in our times of plenty (vv. 11-18)?

Day 4: Reflect

Fasting

A fast is a practice of abstaining from something in order to intentionally attend to God in prayer. As a practice it is not about earning something or getting something from God, but like all spiritual practices, fasting can become a means that we use to connect with God intentionally.

Consider fasting for a day this coming week or during this Lenten season as a way to engage with God.

Participate in a Fast

- Make two lists: one of needs, the other of wants. Ask God to show you where to fast from some of your wants. Offer to God the time you'd spend on those wants in prayer, worship & connection with God.
- 2. Another option is to fast from food. Some believers choose a certain time frame, a certain meal, or a particular type of food to abstain from. Remembering that whatever we fast from, we do so to focus our attention back onto God.
- * If health conditions prevent you from fasting (food), or if you're grappling with disordered eating, we strongly suggest you refrain from this type of fast. Our inability to fast doesn't define our love for God. Fasting doesn't earn us anything from God; rather, our lives in Christ are a result of God's grace.



WEEK 3: MESSAGE NOTES

TEACHER:	

Day 1: Prayer

Prayer, in its most simple form, is engaging with God. We pray to deepen our relationship with Jesus, learn and recognize how the Holy Spirit is present, and trust God with the things we cannot understand or control. There is no right or wrong way to pray; asking Jesus to teach you how to pray is okay. In Luke 11:1, the disciples asked Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray." This means we do not have to have fancy words to come into God's presence. Wherever we are and however we are, you can engage with the Holy Spirit in prayer.

When Jesus practiced prayer, he often went to a place away from others to be with his Father. Lent encourages us to create rhythms of prayer that can reset and refocus our time with God.

In your time with God, pre-written prayers such as the Lord's prayer are meant to be used as phrases to add to; for example, "give us this day our daily bread" is an invitation to ask God to provide for you or others. Beautiful prayers in the scriptures can help create language around prayer; you can also find prayers written by others that can encourage your own prayer time.

Day 2: Scripture

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

If possible, find a quiet and comfortable place. Become aware of God's presence and ask him to open your heart to his Word before you begin to read.

Luke 11:1-13 (NIV)

- ¹ One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."
- ² He said to them, "When you pray, say:
- "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.
- ³ Give us each day our daily bread.
- ⁴ Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation."
- ⁵ Then Jesus said to them, "Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; ⁶ a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.' ⁷ And suppose the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' ⁸ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.
- ⁹ "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

¹¹ "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

1. In what ways does God's grace meet us when we seek God in prayer?

Day 3: Scripture

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

If possible, find a quiet and comfortable place. Become aware of God's presence and ask him to open your heart to his Word before you begin to read.

2 Chronicles 33:1-16

- ¹ Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. ² He did what was evil in the LORD's sight, following the detestable practices of the pagan nations that the LORD had driven from the land ahead of the Israelites. ³ He rebuilt the pagan shrines his father, Hezekiah, had broken down. He constructed altars for the images of Baal and set up Asherah poles. He also bowed before all the powers of the heavens and worshiped them.
- ⁴ He built pagan altars in the Temple of the LORD, the place where the LORD had said, "My name will remain in Jerusalem forever." ⁵ He built these altars for all the powers of the heavens in both courtyards of the LORD's Temple. ⁶ Manasseh also sacrificed his own sons in the fire in the valley of Ben-Hinnom. He practiced sorcery, divination, and witchcraft, and he consulted with mediums and psychics. He did much that was evil in the LORD's sight, arousing his anger.
- ⁷ Manasseh even took a carved idol he had made and set it up in God's Temple, the very place where God had told David and his son Solomon: "My name will be honored forever in this Temple and in Jerusalem—the city I have chosen from among all the tribes of Israel. ⁸ If the Israelites will be careful to obey my commands—all the laws, decrees, and regulations given through Moses—I will not send them into exile from this land that I set aside for your ancestors." ⁹ But Manasseh led the people of Judah and Jerusalem to do even more evil than the pagan nations that the LORD had destroyed when the people of Israel entered the land.

¹⁰ The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they ignored all his warnings. ¹¹ So the LORD sent the commanders of the Assyrian armies, and they took Manasseh prisoner. They put a ring through his nose, bound him in bronze chains, and led him away to Babylon. ¹² But while in deep distress, Manasseh sought the LORD his God and sincerely humbled himself before the God of his ancestors. ¹³ And when he prayed, the LORD listened to him and was moved by his request. So the LORD brought Manasseh back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh finally realized that the LORD alone is God!

¹⁴ After this Manasseh rebuilt the outer wall of the City of David, from west of the Gihon Spring in the Kidron Valley to the Fish Gate, and continuing around the hill of Ophel. He built the wall very high. And he stationed his military officers in all of the fortified towns of Judah. ¹⁵ Manasseh also removed the foreign gods and the idol from the LORD's Temple. He tore down all the altars he had built on the hill where the Temple stood and all the altars that were in Jerusalem, and he dumped them outside the city. ¹⁶ Then he restored the altar of the LORD and sacrificed peace offerings and thanksgiving offerings on it. He also encouraged the people of Judah to worship the LORD, the God of Israel.

- 1. From this passage, what do you learn about prayer?
- 2. Underline or highlight all the places you see God engage with Manasseh and the people of Israel. What do you learn about God?

Day 4: Reflect

Praying the Scriptures

Praying Scripture allows God to direct the content of prayer. In the early centuries of the church, believers were taught to pray the Scriptures. Praying the scriptures can connect us to the heart of God in new and fresh ways. As we have been sitting with the Lord's Prayer this week, use the below prompts to guide your prayer through scripture.

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name." - Pause a moment to consider who God has been in your life and praise him for who he is.

"Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

- Consider your family, neighborhood, city & workplace. Call to mind specific things within those areas that you are asking for God's Kingdom to come and His will be done.

"Give us this day our daily bread." - Take a moment to ask God for the things you need (Wisdom, healing, asking for his intervention etc. etc.)

"Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." -Confess your grudges, bitterness, unforgiveness or other sins to your loving heavenly Father. Pause a moment to receive his grace towards you.

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

- As you look ahead into your day, notice the tasks and interactions

ahead of you. Where might you get off track? Become aware of the ways you may be tempted to spin the truth, manage your image, live out of your false self, lose your patience or envy another. Pray for the Spirit to work in you to resist those temptations and for the Spirit to strengthen you.

"For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever." -End your time of prayer with prayers of trust in God's goodness and his redemptive plan.

Amen.



WEEK 4: MESSAGE NOTES

TEACHER:		

Day 1: Renewal

Lent provides us with an opportunity to renew our relationship with Jesus. We recover practices we loved and cherished that may have fallen by the wayside over the years. Lent brings an intention to the practices that help us relate and rekindle the spark of our love and commitment to Jesus.

Renewing your relationship with Christ through spiritual practices of study, prayer, fasting, confession, worship, fellowship, rest, celebration, service, and generosity can be refreshed by choosing to experience one of these practices you have never done or trying to practice it in a new way.

Lent is the perfect time to set new rhythms for your time with the Holy Spirit. Returning to God, the one who first loved you.

Day 2: Scripture

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

If possible, find a quiet and comfortable place. Become aware of God's presence and ask him to open your heart to his Word before you begin to read.

John 10:1-18

- ¹ "I tell you the truth, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber! ² But the one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ They won't follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don't know his voice."
- ⁶ Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn't understand what he meant, ⁷ so he explained it to them: "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. ¹⁰ The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.
- ¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. ¹² A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don't belong to him and he isn't their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. ¹³ The hired hand runs away because he's working only for the money and doesn't really care about the sheep.
- ¹⁴ "I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, ¹⁵ just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for

the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd.

¹⁷ "The Father loves me because I sacrifice my life so I may take it back again. ¹⁸ No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded."

1. Sometimes, sheep are safe in the pen, and sometimes, they are scattered far from their shepherd. In this passage, what are some things Jesus actively does to draw us near?

Day 3: Scripture

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

If possible, find a quiet and comfortable place. Become aware of God's presence and ask him to open your heart to his Word before you begin to read.

Micah 6

- ¹ Listen to what the Lord is saying:
- "Stand up and state your case against me. Let the mountains and hills be called to witness your complaints.
- And now, O mountains,
 listen to the Lord's complaint!
 He has a case against his people.
 He will bring charges against Israel.
- 3 "O my people, what have I done to you? What have I done to make you tired of me? Answer me!
- For I brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from slavery.
 I sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam to help you.
- Don't you remember, my people, how King Balak of Moab tried to have you cursed and how Balaam son of Beor blessed you instead? And remember your journey from Acacia Grove to Gilgal, when I, the Lord, did everything I could to teach you about my faithfulness."

- 6 What can we bring to the Lord? Should we bring him burnt offerings? Should we bow before God Most High with offerings of yearling calves?
- 7 Should we offer him thousands of rams and ten thousand rivers of olive oil?
 Should we sacrifice our firstborn children to pay for our sins?
- 8 No, O people, the Lord has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.
 - 1. God is faithful to us. He is faithful in keeping his agreement with us and calling us back when we wander. What does the Lord require of us in our renewed commitment to him?
 - 2. Where have you wandered from this list in your relationships with God and others?

Day 4: Reflect

Nothing reminds me of renewal more than rest. In resting in the presence of God we are called to return to God again with our to-do lists undone, with tasks uncompleted, our lives not worked out, and many times our sins unmanaged. And yet- God still calls us to himself, just as we are, and invites us to rest in his grace and be renewed by His Spirit (not our striving). Rest is a reminder that God is God and we are not. Rest is a reminder that even when we accomplish nothing we are still invited into God's goodness towards us. Rest is a reminder that even when we get things wrong we can return to God and his grace is there inviting us to be restored again and again.

"Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the LORD has been good to you." Psalm 116:7

Practice

Consider what kind of rest would refresh you (going for a walk, reading, listening to music, 15 minutes of silence, pausing to drink a cup of coffee etc etc.). Take a moment in the week ahead to enter into that time of rest as a way to return your attention back to God who meets you with grace to renew and restore.



WEEK 5: MESSAGE NOTES

TEACHER:	

Day 1: Charity and Justice

Lent is a season of letting go to be closer to God. This includes giving away earthly possessions to prepare ourselves to celebrate Christ's resurrection. The preparation of a follower of Jesus dates back to the early church. Writings from sources such as the Didache, a guiding document for the church, required individuals to fast, pray, confess, and give away their resources before they joined the community in baptism.

We get to remember and join in the early church's practices in giving away our abundance for the larger community's benefit. In our current culture, we give to trusted non-profits doing fantastic work for the local community and the kingdom.

We look at our abundance and how God can use it for the wholeness of our community. We are engaging with bringing God's good justice on earth here and now. As followers of Jesus, we get to partner with the restorative work Jesus started on the cross and resurrection by first acknowledging our need for salvation and healing and then partnering with God on the work he is already doing today.

Day 2: Scripture

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

If possible, find a quiet and comfortable place. Become aware of God's presence and ask him to open your heart to his Word before you begin to read.

Matthew 20:29-34

²⁹ As Jesus and the disciples left the town of Jericho, a large crowd followed behind. ³⁰ Two blind men were sitting beside the road. When they heard that Jesus was coming that way, they began shouting, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"

³¹ "Be quiet!" the crowd yelled at them.

But they only shouted louder, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"

³² When Jesus heard them, he stopped and called, "What do you want me to do for you?"

³³ "Lord," they said, "we want to see!" ³⁴ Jesus felt sorry for them and touched their eyes. Instantly they could see! Then they followed him.

Acts 3:1-8

¹ Peter and John went to the Temple one afternoon to take part in the three o'clock prayer service. ² As they approached the Temple, a man lame from birth was being carried in. Each day he was put beside the Temple gate, the one called the Beautiful Gate, so he could beg from the people going into the Temple. ³ When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for some money.

⁴ Peter and John looked at him intently, and Peter said, "Look at us!" ⁵ The lame man looked at them eagerly, expecting some money. ⁶ But Peter said,

"I don't have any silver or gold for you. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk!"

⁷ Then Peter took the lame man by the right hand and helped him up. And as he did, the man's feet and ankles were instantly healed and strengthened. ⁸ He jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk! Then, walking, leaping, and praising God, he went into the Temple with them.

- 1. We are all in need of saving or healing from something. What would you say if Jesus asked, "What do you want me to do for you?"
- 2. Reread Acts 3:1-8. What do you note about Peter's posture toward the man who asked for money?

Day 3: Scripture

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

If possible, find a quiet and comfortable place. Become aware of God's presence and ask him to open your heart to his Word before you begin to read.

Isaiah 58:1-11

¹ "Shout with the voice of a trumpet blast. Shout aloud! Don't be timid.

Tell my people Israel of their sins!

² Yet they act so pious!

They come to the Temple every day and seem delighted to learn all about me.

They act like a righteous nation that would never abandon the laws of its God.

They ask me to take action on their behalf, pretending they want to be near me.

³ 'We have fasted before you!' they say.
'Why aren't you impressed?
We have been your hard an aurealyse.

We have been very hard on ourselves, and you don't even notice it!'

"I will tell you why!" I respond.

"It's because you are fasting to please yourselves.

Even while you fast,

you keep oppressing your workers.

⁴ What good is fasting

when you keep on fighting and quarreling?

This kind of fasting

will never get you anywhere with me.

⁵ You humble yourselves

by going through the motions of penance,

bowing your heads like reeds bending in the wind.

You dress in burlap

and cover yourselves with ashes.

Is this what you call fasting?

Do you really think this will please the Lord?

6 "No, this is the kind of fasting I want:
Free those who are wrongly imprisoned;
lighten the burden of those who work for you.
Let the oppressed go free,
and remove the chains that bind people.
7 Share your food with the hungry,
and give shelter to the homeless.
Give clothes to those who need them,
and do not hide from relatives who need your help.

8 "Then your salvation will come like the dawn, and your wounds will quickly heal.
Your godliness will lead you forward, and the glory of the Lord will protect you from behind.
9 Then when you call, the Lord will answer.

'Yes, I am here,' he will quickly reply.

"Remove the heavy yoke of oppression.

Stop pointing your finger and spreading vicious rumors!

10 Feed the hungry,
and help those in trouble.

Then your light will shine out from the darkness,

Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon.

¹¹ The Lord will guide you continually, giving you water when you are dry and restoring your strength.

You will be like a well-watered garden, like an ever-flowing spring.

1. Reread Isaiah 58:1-11. What do you learn about fasting from this passage?

Day 4: Reflect

Shalom is a word in scripture that describes the world as it should be. We often translate it as the word peace, but truthfully, there is not one English word that encapsulates the word Shalom. It evokes the idea of wholeness, flourishing, thriving, harmony, and safety. Shalom is more than just peace; it is an active kind of peace. Scripture tells us in Psalms 34:14 to "Search for Peace and work to maintain it." When we share our lives with others for their thriving and benefit, we engage in the work of peace that God calls us towards and seek the wholeness of our community. Consider this week how you might participate in working for peace in your community by sharing from your abundance for the thriving of your neighbor.

- Partner with "With Love," an organization that seeks to help foster families change the lives of children ages 0-6 by providing resources that nurture dignity, hope, and community. Look through your home for "like new" clothing, baby supplies, toys, books, etc. that you can donate to With Love. If you have a family or roommates, let the whole house join in on the fun together! Check their website here to see what their current needs are. https://www.withloveoregon.org/donate
- Path Home provides rent assistance and case management for families experiencing homelessness. Path Home is committed to providing dignity by giving these families the opportunity to move back into housing as quickly as possible. You can help these families get settled into their housing by sending them their most needed items listed on their Amazon wishlist here: http://tinyurl.com/u8paw472



WEEK 6: MESSAGE NOTES

TEACHER:	

Day 1: Confession

Lent points us towards our identity as a beloved of God. Practicing confession, we recognize how the world's temptations have shaped us and choose to turn to God for forgiveness and healing. During Lent, we are encouraged to confess to God, to trusted relationships, or to church leadership. Confession is part of the restorative kingdom work, choosing to receive God's forgiveness and healing to help bring life to a broken world.

Individually and collectively, we miss the mark. We all fail to live fully into God's Kingdom values. Confession is an opportunity to "unburden" from the guilt and grief accompanying those places of brokenness and allows us to have a restored relationship with God and receive healing. Sins or barriers can come in the form of untruth, unforgiveness, finding hope and peace outside of God, and causing or have caused harm to self or others.

The wonderful thing about confession is that we are sharing about the barriers that keep us from drawing closer to Jesus and choosing to turn toward Christ rather than the temptations. We get to approach our Savior, who freely gives forgiveness quickly and readily. Sharing with trusted community members or church leaders shows an intention to change and spiritually grow.

Day 2: Scripture

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

If possible, find a quiet and comfortable place. Become aware of God's presence and ask him to open your heart to his Word before you begin to read.

Luke 19:1-10

- ¹ Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. ² There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. ³ He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way.
- ⁵ When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. "Zacchaeus!" he said. "Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today."
- ⁶ Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. ⁷ But the people were displeased. "He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner," they grumbled.
- ⁸ Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!"
- ⁹ Jesus responded, "Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost."
 - 1. Jesus knows everything about us what our souls long for, and how we often satisfy those longings outside of Jesus, which impedes fellowship with God. What is attractive about the way Jesus relates with Zacchaeus?

Day 3: Scripture

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

If possible, find a quiet and comfortable place. Become aware of God's presence and ask him to open your heart to his Word before you begin to read.

1 John 1:5-10

⁵ This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. ⁶ So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness; we are not practicing the truth. ⁷ But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

⁸ If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. ⁹ But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts.

1 John 2:1-2

¹ My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous. ² He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.

James 9:16

¹⁶ Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

1. What do we experience in confessing our sin? What does our silence or unwillingness to confess our sins communicate to ourselves, others, and God?

Day 4: Reflect

Many times, we run from the idea of confession. Our understanding of confession has oftentimes been rooted in fear, shame, or condemnation. However, scripture says there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. With that in mind, we may find that on the other side of our confession is a heavenly father who has been waiting for us in order to free us from the sin that ensnares our lives so easily. On the other side of confession are grace, healing, and wholeness. When we confess to God and one another, may we find understanding hearts, listening ears, and friends who want to lift us in prayer to a good God who has the power to help us overcome.

"We cannot be healed of what we refuse to acknowledge. So we examine ourselves in light of God's word for the sake of our healing and restoration." - Esau McCaulley

Take some time to do some self-reflection. Below is a list of things that may have a hold in your life, with a scripture that invites you to freedom. Identify and circle areas where there is a hold in your life, take a moment to read the correlating scripture & bring that to God in prayer. You'll take time this week in your small group to discuss these things and pray for one another.

- Bitterness → 2 Corinthians 5:17-19; Forgiveness
- Control → Matthew 16:24-25; Surrender
- Idolatry → Matthew 6:25-26; Contentment
- Despair → Psalms 34:17-18; Hope
- Jealousy → 1 Chronicles 16:34 & Matthew 7:9-11; Gratefulness
- Sexual Immorality → Galatians 5:13-16,19-21 & Genesis 2:22-25;
 Purity
- False Teachings/Religions → John 1:1-5 & John 14:6-7; God's Word
- Insecurity → Ephesians 2:10 & Romans 8:38-39; Security in Christ
- Rejection → Psalms 139:14 & John 3:16; Acceptance

- Deceit → John 8:32 & Psalms 23:1; Truthfulness
- Fear → 2 Chronicles 20:6 & Matthew 10:29-31; Trust in God
- Pride → Matthew 16:24; Humility

^{**}Activity adapted from Rooted Devotionals (experiencerooted.com)



WEEK 7: MESSAGE NOTES

TEACHER:

Day 1: Forty

As we get close to wrapping up the forty days of Lent, we reflect on the number forty. Forty days is a significant number in the Bible. The start of Lent reflects on Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. In Matthew 4:1-11, Jesus fasted for "forty days and forty nights." The tempter came at the weakest moment for him, offering bread representing economic power, the temple representing religious power, and the mountain symbolizing political power. These temptations, the world's powers, were resisted to reveal the true identity and kind of king Jesus is. He was a humble prophet, priest, and king who fulfilled the promises of God in his life, death, and resurrection—providing restoration for all in salvation, in a way leading us to the promised land.

The number forty is a significant number for the writers of the New Testament. The number forty signifies a fulfillment of God's promises. The people of Israel wandered in the desert wilderness for forty years before entering the promised land. The time spent away from the world that tried to craft their story of God's people as the oppressed was reoriented during the forty years to their identity as children of God.

Today, we are invited to reflect on the desert or wilderness wanderings of our lives and notice our identity as a child of God. Just as Jesus recognized his inherited identity from God and resisted worldly power, we, too, can recognize our identity in Jesus and resist the world's temptations. In turn, we get to see the promises of God fulfilled from now and eternity.

Day 2: Scripture

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

If possible, find a quiet and comfortable place. Become aware of God's presence and ask him to open your heart to his Word before you begin to read.

1 Kings 19:3-18

- ³ Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah, and he left his servant there. ⁴ Then he went on alone into the wilderness, traveling all day. He sat down under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors who have already died."
- ⁵ Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree. But as he was sleeping, an angel touched him and told him, "Get up and eat!" ⁶ He looked around and there beside his head was some bread baked on hot stones and a jar of water! So he ate and drank and lay down again.
- ⁷ Then the angel of the Lord came again and touched him and said, "Get up and eat some more, or the journey ahead will be too much for you." ⁸ So he got up and ate and drank, and the food gave him enough strength to travel forty days and forty nights to Mount Sinai, the mountain of God. ⁹ There he came to a cave, where he spent the night.

But the Lord said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

- ¹⁰ Elijah replied, "I have zealously served the Lord God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too."
- ¹¹ "Go out and stand before me on the mountain," the Lord told him. And as Elijah stood there, the Lord passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but

the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. ¹² And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

And a voice said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

¹⁴ He replied again, "I have zealously served the Lord God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too."

¹⁵ Then the Lord told him, "Go back the same way you came, and travel to the wilderness of Damascus. When you arrive there, anoint Hazael to be king of Aram. ¹⁶ Then anoint Jehu grandson of Nimshi to be king of Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from the town of Abel-meholah to replace you as my prophet. ¹⁷ Anyone who escapes from Hazael will be killed by Jehu, and those who escape Jehu will be killed by Elisha! ¹⁸ Yet I will preserve 7,000 others in Israel who have never bowed down to Baal or kissed him!"

- 1. Fear drove Elijah into his wilderness journey. What do you learn from this passage, about God in his encounter with Elijah?
- 2. What might this teach us about our identity in being a child of God?

Day 3: Scripture

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

If possible, find a quiet and comfortable place. Become aware of God's presence and ask him to open your heart to his Word before you begin to read.

Matthew 4:1-11

- ¹ Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. ² For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry.
- ³ During that time the devil came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread." ⁴ But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."
- ⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, ⁶ and said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say, 'He will order his angels to protect you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone."
- ⁷ Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the LORD your God."
- ⁸ Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ "I will give it all to you," he said, "if you will kneel down and worship me."
- ¹⁰ "Get out of here, Satan," Jesus told him. "For the Scriptures say, 'You must worship the LORD your God and serve only him.'" ¹¹ Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.

- 1. Behind the temptations Jesus faced, Satan is baiting Jesus to deny his identity as the Son of God. In what ways do our temptations lure us to restrict our identity as children of God?
- 2. What are the things we turn to to satisfy our needs?

Day 4: Reflect

We are closing out our Lent journey! Next week, we will spend time in scripture that walks us through Jesus' journey to the cross and Old Testament passages that look toward who Jesus would be. We started our Lent journey by reflecting on our expectations; let's close it out by reflecting on our experiences.

Considering the last several weeks, answer the following questions.

- 1. When did you encounter God's grace? Where did you see God's presence?
- 2. What change did you see in your life? What still needs shifting?
- 3. What practice was able to both bring you joy and attune your heart to God?
- 4. What practice might you continue to pick up as a realistic rhythm of grace in your life moving forward?



WEEK 8: MESSAGE NOTES

TEACHER:	

As we read scripture and practiced different spiritual disciplines, we were reminded of our need for a Savior. During this last week of Lent, we will trace the path Jesus walked during the week of his crucifixion, from his triumphal entry into Jerusalem to his glorious resurrection on Easter Sunday. Let's spend this week remembering and celebrating the story of our Savior and his sacrifice for us. Jesus walked among us; we get to walk alongside him.

Palm Sunday: Look, Your King is Coming to You

Zechariah 9:9

9 Rejoice, O people of Zion! Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious, yet he is humble, riding on a donkey riding on a donkey's colt.

1. Use your senses to interact with the scene, the environment, and the people. What do you see, hear, taste, smell and touch?

John 12:12-50

¹² The next day, the news that Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem swept through the city. A large crowd of Passover visitors ¹³ took palm branches and went down the road to meet him. They shouted,

"Praise God!

Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hail to the King of Israel!"

- ¹⁴ Jesus found a young donkey and rode on it, fulfilling the prophecy that said:
- 15 "Don't be afraid, people of Jerusalem. Look, your King is coming, riding on a donkey's colt."
- ¹⁶ His disciples didn't understand at the time that this was a fulfillment of prophecy. But after Jesus entered into his glory, they remembered what had happened and realized that these things had been written about him.
- ¹⁷ Many in the crowd had seen Jesus call Lazarus from the tomb, raising him from the dead, and they were telling others about it. ¹⁸ That was the reason so many went out to meet him—because they had heard about this miraculous sign. ¹⁹ Then the Pharisees said to each other, "There's nothing we can do. Look, everyone has gone after him!"
- ²⁰ Some Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration ²¹ paid a visit to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee. They said, "Sir, we want to meet Jesus." ²² Philip told Andrew about it, and they went together to ask Jesus.
- ²³ Jesus replied, "Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory. ²⁴ I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels —a plentiful harvest of new lives. ²⁵ Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity. ²⁶ Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me.
- ²⁷ "Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, 'Father, save me from this hour'? But this is the very reason I came! ²⁸ Father, bring glory to your name."

Then a voice spoke from heaven, saying, "I have already brought glory to my name, and I will do so again." ²⁹ When the crowd heard the voice, some thought it was thunder, while others declared an angel had spoken to him.

³⁰ Then Jesus told them, "The voice was for your benefit, not mine. ³¹ The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out. ³² And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself." ³³ He said this to indicate how he was going to die.

³⁴ The crowd responded, "We understood from Scripture that the Messiah would live forever. How can you say the Son of Man will die? Just who is this Son of Man, anyway?"

³⁵ Jesus replied, "My light will shine for you just a little longer. Walk in the light while you can, so the darkness will not overtake you. Those who walk in the darkness cannot see where they are going. ³⁶ Put your trust in the light while there is still time; then you will become children of the light."

After saying these things, Jesus went away and was hidden from them.

³⁷ But despite all the miraculous signs Jesus had done, most of the people still did not believe in him. ³⁸ This is exactly what Isaiah the prophet had predicted:

"Lord, who has believed our message?

To whom has the Lord revealed his powerful arm?"

39 But the people couldn't believe, for as Isaiah also said,

40 "The Lord has blinded their eyes
and hardened their hearts—

so that their eyes cannot see,
and their hearts cannot understand,
and they cannot turn to me
and have me heal them."

⁴¹ Isaiah was referring to Jesus when he said this, because he saw the future and spoke of the Messiah's glory. ⁴² Many people did believe in him,

however, including some of the Jewish leaders. But they wouldn't admit it for fear that the Pharisees would expel them from the synagogue. ⁴³ For they loved human praise more than the praise of God.

⁴⁴ Jesus shouted to the crowds, "If you trust me, you are trusting not only me, but also God who sent me. ⁴⁵ For when you see me, you are seeing the one who sent me. ⁴⁶ I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark. ⁴⁷ I will not judge those who hear me but don't obey me, for I have come to save the world and not to judge it. ⁴⁸ But all who reject me and my message will be judged on the day of judgment by the truth I have spoken. ⁴⁹ I don't speak on my own authority. The Father who sent me has commanded me what to say and how to say it. ⁵⁰ And I know his commands lead to eternal life; so I say whatever the Father tells me to say."

Palm Sunday reminds us that God is faithful to fulfill his promises as found in his word. In one voice, we say "Praise God! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord!"

Monday: Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

Psalm 51:6-7

- ⁶ But you desire honesty from the womb, teaching me wisdom even there.
- ⁷ Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
 - 1. Use your senses to interact with the scene, the environment, and the people. What do you see, hear, taste, smell and touch?

John 13

- ¹ Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, and now he loved them to the very end. ² It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. ⁴ So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, ⁵ and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.
- ⁶ When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"
- ⁷ Jesus replied, "You don't understand now what I am doing, but someday you will."
- ⁸ "No," Peter protested, "you will never ever wash my feet!"

Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't belong to me."

- ⁹ Simon Peter exclaimed, "Then wash my hands and head as well, Lord, not just my feet!"
- ¹⁰ Jesus replied, "A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet, to be entirely clean. And you disciples are clean, but not all of you." ¹¹ For Jesus knew who would betray him. That is what he meant when he said, "Not all of you are clean."
- ¹² After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing? ¹³ You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am. ¹⁴ And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. ¹⁵ I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. ¹⁶ I tell you the truth, slaves are not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them.
- ¹⁸ "I am not saying these things to all of you; I know the ones I have chosen. But this fulfills the Scripture that says, 'The one who eats my food has turned against me.' ¹⁹ I tell you this beforehand, so that when it happens you will believe that I AM the Messiah. ²⁰ I tell you the truth, anyone who welcomes my messenger is welcoming me, and anyone who welcomes me is welcoming the Father who sent me."
- ²¹ Now Jesus was deeply troubled, and he exclaimed, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me!"
- ²² The disciples looked at each other, wondering whom he could mean. ²³ The disciple Jesus loved was sitting next to Jesus at the table. ²⁴ Simon Peter motioned to him to ask, "Who's he talking about?" ²⁵ So that disciple leaned over to Jesus and asked, "Lord, who is it?"
- ²⁶ Jesus responded, "It is the one to whom I give the bread I dip in the bowl." And when he had dipped it, he gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷ When Judas had eaten the bread, Satan entered into him. Then

Jesus told him, "Hurry and do what you're going to do." ²⁸ None of the others at the table knew what Jesus meant. ²⁹ Since Judas was their treasurer, some thought Jesus was telling him to go and pay for the food or to give some money to the poor. ³⁰ So Judas left at once, going out into the night.

³¹ As soon as Judas left the room, Jesus said, "The time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory, and God will be glorified because of him. ³² And since God receives glory because of the Son, he will give his own glory to the Son, and he will do so at once. ³³ Dear children, I will be with you only a little longer. And as I told the Jewish leaders, you will search for me, but you can't come where I am going. ³⁴ So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. ³⁵ Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."

³⁶ Simon Peter asked, "Lord, where are you going?"

And Jesus replied, "You can't go with me now, but you will follow me later."

- ³⁷ "But why can't I come now, Lord?" he asked. "I'm ready to die for you."
- ³⁸ Jesus answered, "Die for me? I tell you the truth, Peter—before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me.

As we become more and more aware of our sin and shame, it's the grace of Jesus that meets us where we are. He kneels before us and washes us clean.

Tuesday: Jesus Promises His Presence

Isaiah 42:16

¹⁶ I will lead blind Israel down a new path, guiding them along an unfamiliar way.
I will brighten the darkness before them and smooth out the road ahead of them.
Yes, I will indeed do these things;
I will not forsake them.

1. Use your senses to interact with the scene, the environment, and the people. What do you see, hear, taste, smell and touch?

John 14

- ¹ "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. ² There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? ³ When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going."
- ⁵ "No, we don't know, Lord," Thomas said. "We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?"
- ⁶ Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!"
- ⁸ Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied."
- ⁹ Jesus replied, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don't know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you? ¹⁰ Don't you believe that I am

in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. ¹¹ Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do.

¹² "I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. ¹³ You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. ¹⁴ Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!

¹⁵ "If you love me, obey my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. ¹⁷ He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. ¹⁸ No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. ¹⁹ Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live. ²⁰ When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹ Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them."

²² Judas (not Judas Iscariot, but the other disciple with that name) said to him, "Lord, why are you going to reveal yourself only to us and not to the world at large?"

²³ Jesus replied, "All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them. ²⁴ Anyone who doesn't love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me. ²⁵ I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. ²⁶ But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

²⁷ "I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid. ²⁸ Remember what I told you: I am going away, but I will come back to you again. If you really loved me, you would be happy that I am going to the Father, who is greater than I am. ²⁹ I have told you these things before they happen so that when they do happen, you will believe.

³⁰ "I don't have much more time to talk to you, because the ruler of this world approaches. He has no power over me, ³¹ but I will do what the Father requires of me, so that the world will know that I love the Father. Come, let's be going.

John 15:1-27

- ¹ "I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. ³ You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. ⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.
- ⁵ "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. ⁷ But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! ⁸ When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.
- ⁹ "I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. ¹⁰ When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! ¹² This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved

you. ¹³ There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me. ¹⁶ You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

¹⁸ "If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. ¹⁹ The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you. ²⁰ Do you remember what I told you? 'A slave is not greater than the master.' Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you. ²¹ They will do all this to you because of me, for they have rejected the one who sent me. ²² They would not be guilty if I had not come and spoken to them. But now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ Anyone who hates me also hates my Father. ²⁴ If I hadn't done such miraculous signs among them that no one else could do, they would not be guilty. But as it is, they have seen everything I did, yet they still hate me and my Father. ²⁵ This fulfills what is written in their Scriptures: 'They hated me without cause.'

²⁶ "But I will send you the Advocate—the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me. ²⁷ And you must also testify about me because you have been with me from the beginning of my ministry.

In the same way Jesus assured his disciples that he'd never leave them, that very promise extends to us. God invites us to trust him, and our trust grows as we invest and spend time in His presence.

Wednesday: The Promised Counselor

Joel 2:28-29

28 "Then, after doing all those things,
I will pour out my Spirit upon all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy.
Your old men will dream dreams,
and your young men will see visions.
29 In those days I will pour out my Spirit
even on servants—men and women alike.

1. Use your senses to interact with the scene, the environment, and the people. What do you see, hear, taste, smell and touch?

John 15:26-27

²⁶ "But I will send you the Advocate—the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me. ²⁷ And you must also testify about me because you have been with me from the beginning of my ministry.

John 16

¹ "I have told you these things so that you won't abandon your faith. ² For you will be expelled from the synagogues, and the time is coming when those who kill you will think they are doing a holy service for God. ³ This is because they have never known the Father or me. ⁴ Yes, I'm telling you these things now, so that when they happen, you will remember my warning. I didn't tell you earlier because I was going to be with you for a while longer.

⁵ "But now I am going away to the one who sent me, and not one of you is asking where I am going. ⁶ Instead, you grieve because of what I've told

you. ⁷ But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you. ⁸ And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment. ⁹ The world's sin is that it refuses to believe in me. ¹⁰ Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more. ¹¹ Judgment will come because the ruler of this world has already been judged.

¹² "There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can't bear it now. ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. ¹⁴ He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, 'The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.'

¹⁶ "In a little while you won't see me anymore. But a little while after that, you will see me again."

¹⁷ Some of the disciples asked each other, "What does he mean when he says, 'In a little while you won't see me, but then you will see me,' and 'I am going to the Father'? ¹⁸ And what does he mean by 'a little while'? We don't understand."

¹⁹ Jesus realized they wanted to ask him about it, so he said, "Are you asking yourselves what I meant? I said in a little while you won't see me, but a little while after that you will see me again. ²⁰ I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn over what is going to happen to me, but the world will rejoice. You will grieve, but your grief will suddenly turn to wonderful joy. ²¹ It will be like a woman suffering the pains of labor. When her child is born, her anguish gives way to joy because she has brought a new baby into the world. ²² So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again; then you will rejoice, and no one can rob you of that joy. ²³ At that time you won't need to ask me for anything. I tell you the truth, you will ask the Father directly, and he will grant your request because you use my name. ²⁴ You haven't done this before. Ask, using my name, and you will receive, and you will have abundant joy.

²⁵ "I have spoken of these matters in figures of speech, but soon I will stop speaking figuratively and will tell you plainly all about the Father. ²⁶ Then you will ask in my name. I'm not saying I will ask the Father on your behalf, ²⁷ for the Father himself loves you dearly because you love me and believe that I came from God. ²⁸ Yes, I came from the Father into the world, and now I will leave the world and return to the Father."

²⁹ Then his disciples said, "At last you are speaking plainly and not figuratively. ³⁰ Now we understand that you know everything, and there's no need to question you. From this we believe that you came from God."

³¹ Jesus asked, "Do you finally believe? ³² But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when you will be scattered, each one going his own way, leaving me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. ³³ I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."

The gift of the Holy Spirit, God's living presence within us, is extended to all of God's people!
Though unmerited, we have access to God and don't have to face the day alone. Thank you, God, for the gift of yourself!

Thursday: Jesus Prays for His Disciples

Jude 24-25

²⁴ Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault. ²⁵ All glory to him who alone is God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord. All glory, majesty, power, and authority are his before all time, and in the present, and beyond all time! Amen.

1. Use your senses to interact with the scene, the environment, and the people. What do you see, hear, taste, smell and touch?

John 17

¹ After saying all these things, Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son so he can give glory back to you. ² For you have given him authority over everyone. He gives eternal life to each one you have given him. ³ And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth. ⁴ I brought glory to you here on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. ⁵ Now, Father, bring me into the glory we shared before the world began.

⁶ "I have revealed you to the ones you gave me from this world. They were always yours. You gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything I have is a gift from you, ⁸ for I have passed on to them the message you gave me. They accepted it and know that I came from you, and they believe you sent me.

⁹ "My prayer is not for the world, but for those you have given me, because they belong to you. ¹⁰ All who are mine belong to you, and you have given them to me, so they bring me glory. ¹¹ Now I am departing from the world; they are staying in this world, but I am coming to you. Holy Father, you have given me your name; now protect them by the

power of your name so that they will be united just as we are. ¹² During my time here, I protected them by the power of the name you gave me. I guarded them so that not one was lost, except the one headed for destruction, as the Scriptures foretold.

¹³ "Now I am coming to you. I told them many things while I was with them in this world so they would be filled with my joy. ¹⁴ I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁵ I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. ¹⁶ They do not belong to this world any more than I do. ¹⁷ Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth. ¹⁸ Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world. ¹⁹ And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth.

²⁰ "I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. ²¹ I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.

²² "I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. ²³ I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me. ²⁴ Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began!

²⁵ "O righteous Father, the world doesn't know you, but I do; and these disciples know you sent me. ²⁶ I have revealed you to them, and I will continue to do so. Then your love for me will be in them, and I will be in them."

John 18:1-27

¹ After saying these things, Jesus crossed the Kidron Valley with his disciples and entered a grove of olive trees. ² Judas, the betrayer, knew

this place, because Jesus had often gone there with his disciples. ³ The leading priests and Pharisees had given Judas a contingent of Roman soldiers and Temple guards to accompany him. Now with blazing torches, lanterns, and weapons, they arrived at the olive grove.

- ⁴ Jesus fully realized all that was going to happen to him, so he stepped forward to meet them. "Who are you looking for?" he asked.
- ⁵ "Jesus the Nazarene," they replied.
- "I AM he," Jesus said. (Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.) ⁶ As Jesus said "I AM he," they all drew back and fell to the ground! ⁷ Once more he asked them, "Who are you looking for?"

And again they replied, "Jesus the Nazarene."

- ⁸ "I told you that I AM he," Jesus said. "And since I am the one you want, let these others go." ⁹ He did this to fulfill his own statement: "I did not lose a single one of those you have given me."
- ¹⁰ Then Simon Peter drew a sword and slashed off the right ear of Malchus, the high priest's slave. ¹¹ But Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Shall I not drink from the cup of suffering the Father has given me?"
- ¹² So the soldiers, their commanding officer, and the Temple guards arrested Jesus and tied him up. ¹³ First they took him to Annas, since he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest at that time. ¹⁴ Caiaphas was the one who had told the other Jewish leaders, "It's better that one man should die for the people."
- ¹⁵ Simon Peter followed Jesus, as did another of the disciples. That other disciple was acquainted with the high priest, so he was allowed to enter the high priest's courtyard with Jesus. ¹⁶ Peter had to stay outside the gate. Then the disciple who knew the high priest spoke to the woman watching at the gate, and she let Peter in. ¹⁷ The woman asked Peter, "You're not one of that man's disciples, are you?"

- "No." he said. "I am not."
- ¹⁸ Because it was cold, the household servants and the guards had made a charcoal fire. They stood around it, warming themselves, and Peter stood with them, warming himself.
- ¹⁹ Inside, the high priest began asking Jesus about his followers and what he had been teaching them. ²⁰ Jesus replied, "Everyone knows what I teach. I have preached regularly in the synagogues and the Temple, where the people gather. I have not spoken in secret. ²¹ Why are you asking me this question? Ask those who heard me. They know what I said."
- ²² Then one of the Temple guards standing nearby slapped Jesus across the face. "Is that the way to answer the high priest?" he demanded.
- ²³ Jesus replied, "If I said anything wrong, you must prove it. But if I'm speaking the truth, why are you beating me?"
- ²⁴ Then Annas bound Jesus and sent him to Caiaphas, the high priest.
- ²⁵ Meanwhile, as Simon Peter was standing by the fire warming himself, they asked him again, "You're not one of his disciples, are you?"

He denied it, saying, "No, I am not."

²⁶ But one of the household slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Didn't I see you out there in the olive grove with Jesus?" ²⁷ Again Peter denied it. And immediately a rooster crowed.

Jesus interceded for his disciples and for those who would believe in him in the future. He prayed for you. He is able to keep us from falling away and has promised to bring us into his glorious presence without a single fault. Glory to God!

Good Friday

Isaiah 53:1-7

- Who has believed our message? To whom has the Lord revealed his powerful arm?
- ² My servant grew up in the Lord's presence like a tender green shoot, like a root in dry ground.

There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him.

³ He was despised and rejected a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief.

We turned our backs on him and looked the other way.

He was despised, and we did not care.

⁴ Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down.

And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins!

⁵ But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins.

He was beaten so we could be whole.

He was whipped so we could be healed.

⁶ All of us, like sheep, have strayed away.

We have left God's paths to follow our own.

Yet the Lord laid on him

the sins of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word.

He was led like a lamb to the slaughter.

And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth.

1. Use your senses to interact with the scene, the environment, and the people. What do you see, hear, taste, smell and touch?

John 18:28-40

- ²⁸ Jesus' trial before Caiaphas ended in the early hours of the morning. Then he was taken to the headquarters of the Roman governor. His accusers didn't go inside because it would defile them, and they wouldn't be allowed to celebrate the Passover. ²⁹ So Pilate, the governor, went out to them and asked, "What is your charge against this man?"
- ³⁰ "We wouldn't have handed him over to you if he weren't a criminal!" they retorted.
- ³¹ "Then take him away and judge him by your own law," Pilate told them.
- "Only the Romans are permitted to execute someone," the Jewish leaders replied. ³² (This fulfilled Jesus' prediction about the way he would die.)
- ³³ Then Pilate went back into his headquarters and called for Jesus to be brought to him. "Are you the king of the Jews?" he asked him.
- ³⁴ Jesus replied, "Is this your own question, or did others tell you about me?"
- ³⁵ "Am I a Jew?" Pilate retorted. "Your own people and their leading priests brought you to me for trial. Why? What have you done?"
- ³⁶ Jesus answered, "My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world."

³⁷ Pilate said, "So you are a king?"

Jesus responded, "You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true."

³⁸ "What is truth?" Pilate asked. Then he went out again to the people and told them, "He is not guilty of any crime. ³⁹ But you have a custom of asking me to release one prisoner each year at Passover. Would you like me to release this 'King of the Jews'?"

⁴⁰ But they shouted back, "No! Not this man. We want Barabbas!" (Barabbas was a revolutionary.)

John 19

- ¹ Then Pilate had Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip. ² The soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they put a purple robe on him. ³ "Hail! King of the Jews!" they mocked, as they slapped him across the face.
- ⁴ Pilate went outside again and said to the people, "I am going to bring him out to you now, but understand clearly that I find him not guilty." ⁵ Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said, "Look, here is the man!"
- ⁶ When they saw him, the leading priests and Temple guards began shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

"Take him yourselves and crucify him," Pilate said. "I find him not guilty."

⁷ The Jewish leaders replied, "By our law he ought to die because he called himself the Son of God."

- ⁸ When Pilate heard this, he was more frightened than ever. ⁹ He took Jesus back into the headquarters again and asked him, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave no answer. ¹⁰ "Why don't you talk to me?" Pilate demanded. "Don't you realize that I have the power to release you or crucify you?"
- ¹¹ Then Jesus said, "You would have no power over me at all unless it were given to you from above. So the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin."
- ¹² Then Pilate tried to release him, but the Jewish leaders shouted, "If you release this man, you are no 'friend of Caesar.' Anyone who declares himself a king is a rebel against Caesar."
- ¹³ When they said this, Pilate brought Jesus out to them again. Then Pilate sat down on the judgment seat on the platform that is called the Stone Pavement (in Hebrew, Gabbatha). ¹⁴ It was now about noon on the day of preparation for the Passover. And Pilate said to the people, "Look, here is your king!"
- ¹⁵ "Away with him," they yelled. "Away with him! Crucify him!"
- "What? Crucify your king?" Pilate asked.
- "We have no king but Caesar," the leading priests shouted back.
- ¹⁶ Then Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus away. ¹⁷ Carrying the cross by himself, he went to the place called Place of the Skull (in Hebrew, Golgotha). ¹⁸ There they nailed him to the cross. Two others were crucified with him, one on either side, with Jesus between them. ¹⁹ And Pilate posted a sign on the cross that read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." ²⁰ The place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, so that many people could read it.

- ²¹ Then the leading priests objected and said to Pilate, "Change it from 'The King of the Jews' to 'He said, I am King of the Jews.'"
- ²² Pilate replied, "No, what I have written, I have written."

²³ When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they divided his clothes among the four of them. They also took his robe, but it was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. ²⁴ So they said, "Rather than tearing it apart, let's throw dice for it." This fulfilled the Scripture that says, "They divided my garments among themselves and threw dice for my clothing." So that is what they did.

²⁵ Standing near the cross were Jesus' mother, and his mother's sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother standing there beside the disciple he loved, he said to her, "Dear woman, here is your son." ²⁷ And he said to this disciple, "Here is your mother." And from then on this disciple took her into his home.

²⁸ Jesus knew that his mission was now finished, and to fulfill Scripture he said, "I am thirsty." ²⁹ A jar of sour wine was sitting there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to his lips. ³⁰ When Jesus had tasted it, he said, "It is finished!" Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

³¹ It was the day of preparation, and the Jewish leaders didn't want the bodies hanging there the next day, which was the Sabbath (and a very special Sabbath, because it was Passover week). So they asked Pilate to hasten their deaths by ordering that their legs be broken. Then their bodies could be taken down. ³² So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus. ³³ But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they didn't break his legs. ³⁴ One of the soldiers, however, pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out. ³⁵ (This report is from an eyewitness giving an accurate account. He speaks the truth so that you also may continue to believe.) ³⁶ These things happened in fulfillment of the Scriptures that say, "Not one of his bones will be broken," ³⁷ and "They will look on the one they pierced."

³⁸ Afterward Joseph of Arimathea, who had been a secret disciple of Jesus (because he feared the Jewish leaders), asked Pilate for permission to take

down Jesus' body. When Pilate gave permission, Joseph came and took the body away. ³⁹ With him came Nicodemus, the man who had come to Jesus at night. He brought about seventy-five pounds of perfumed ointment made from myrrh and aloes. ⁴⁰ Following Jewish burial custom, they wrapped Jesus' body with the spices in long sheets of linen cloth. ⁴¹ The place of crucifixion was near a garden, where there was a new tomb, never used before. ⁴² And so, because it was the day of preparation for the Jewish Passover and since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

Though despised and rejected, Jesus gathered the brokenness of humanity past, present, and future – and in embracing the cross, restored us and declared us righteous.

Holy Saturday

Isaiah 53:8-12

⁸ Unjustly condemned, he was led away.

No one cared that he died without descendants, that his life was cut short in midstream.

But he was struck down

for the rebellion of my people.

⁹ He had done no wrong and had never deceived anyone.

But he was buried like a criminal; he was put in a rich man's grave.

¹⁰ But it was the LORD's good plan to crush him and cause him grief.

Yet when his life is made an offering for sin, he will have many descendants.

He will enjoy a long life,

and the LORD's good plan will prosper in his hands.

¹¹ When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied.

And because of his experience,

my righteous servant will make it possible

for many to be counted righteous,

for he will bear all their sins.

¹² I will give him the honors of a victorious soldier, because he exposed himself to death.

He was counted among the rebels.

He bore the sins of many and interceded for rebels.

1. Use your senses to interact with the scene, the environment, and the people. What do you see, hear, taste, smell and touch?

Matthew 27:62-66

⁶² The next day, on the Sabbath, the leading priests and Pharisees went to see Pilate. ⁶³ They told him, "Sir, we remember what that deceiver once said while he was still alive: 'After three days I will rise from the dead.' ⁶⁴ So we request that you seal the tomb until the third day. This will prevent his disciples from coming and stealing his body and then telling everyone he was raised from the dead! If that happens, we'll be worse off than we were at first."

⁶⁵ Pilate replied, "Take guards and secure it the best you can." ⁶⁶ So they sealed the tomb and posted guards to protect it.

Luke 23:54-56

- ⁵⁴ This was done late on Friday afternoon, the day of preparation, as the Sabbath was about to begin.
- ⁵⁵ As his body was taken away, the women from Galilee followed and saw the tomb where his body was placed. ⁵⁶ Then they went home and prepared spices and ointments to anoint his body. But by the time they were finished the Sabbath had begun, so they rested as required by the law.

In Jesus' tomb, death was sealed by a stone, as every heart grieved and understood their powerlessness in the face of death. Their Sabbath, now our Holy Saturday, signifies a waiting period—an acknowledgement of our powerlessness and need to depend on God. As we wade through the powerless Saturdays of our lives, we cling to hope by looking to the Messiah who came, is coming, and will come.

Resurrection Sunday

Psalm 16:9-11

- 9 No wonder my heart is glad, and I rejoice. My body rests in safety.
- ¹⁰ For you will not leave my soul among the dead or allow your holy one to rot in the grave.
- ¹¹ You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever.
 - 1. Use your senses to interact with the scene, the environment, and the people. What do you see, hear, taste, smell and touch?

John 20:1-10

- ¹ Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. ² She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, "They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"
- ³ Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb. ⁴ They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn't go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷ while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings. ⁸ Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed— ⁹ for until then they still hadn't understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then they went home.

Luke 24:1-10

- ²⁴ But very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. ² They found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. ³ So they went in, but they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ As they stood there puzzled, two men suddenly appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes.
- ⁵ The women were terrified and bowed with their faces to the ground. Then the men asked, "Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive? ⁶ He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Remember what he told you back in Galilee, ⁷ that the Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and that he would rise again on the third day."
- ⁸ Then they remembered that he had said this. ⁹ So they rushed back from the tomb to tell his eleven disciples—and everyone else—what had happened. ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and several other women who told the apostles what had happened.

He is risen. He is risen, indeed!
Jesus is our living hope. May the hope of the resurrection bring us great joy and anticipation for the coming day when we will see Him face to face—forever.

Looking for more information about Lent and spiritual practices?

Many of the practices in this book have been adapted from Adele Calhoun's book "The Spiritual Disciplines Handbook".

OTHER LENT RESOURCES:

Esau McCulley - Lent: The Season of Repentance and Renewal

Malcom Guite - The Word in the Wilderness: A Poem a Day for Lent and Easter





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