



2025 LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

KNOWING  
**Jesus  
together**

Lebanon Presbyterian Church



# Knowing Jesus Together

Lent is a time for repentance and reflection. Each of us knows Jesus in a unique way, and all of us want to know Jesus more. Knowing Jesus is a central aspect of the gospel. Reading and pondering how various people who encounter Jesus come to know Him can expand our understanding of our Savior. So, in this Lenten season, we will recall those experiences of people: how they met the Savior and what they (and we) learned about our Lord in that encounter.

## **During the first days of Lent**

People who met and knew Jesus early in His life and ministry

### **March 10-15**

People whom Jesus healed

### **March 17-22**

People who express faith in Jesus

### **March 24-29**

People who experience forgiveness from Jesus

### **March 31-April 5**

People who experience Jesus as rabbi/teacher

### **April 7-12**

People who seek to be Jesus's disciples

### **April 13-20**

People who encounter Jesus during Holy Week

**During this Lenten season, you are encouraged to experience daily Bible Study using scriptures provided each week.**

**MAY THE LORD BLESS US ALL AS WE SEEK TO KNOW HIM, TURN TO HIM FOR HEALING, GROW IN FAITH IN HIM, EXPERIENCE HIS FORGIVENESS, LEARN FROM HIM, GROW AS HIS DISCIPLES, AND REJOICE IN THE HOPE OF OUR SAVIOR.**

# Ash Wednesday, March 5

LUKE 1:41, 76-77; JOHN 1:29

*“And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins,”* (LUKE 1:41, 76-77 ESV)

*“The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”* (JOHN 1:29 ESV)

Mary visits with her aunt Elizabeth in Judah. The baby in Elizabeth’s womb leaps for joy when Mary approaches, for she is with child of the baby, Jesus. Elizabeth’s baby was later called “John the Baptizer”. And from Elizabeth’s womb, he is already glorifying his God!

Zachariah, the priest and husband of Elizabeth, is announcing that their son John will be the prophet of the Most High!

So, John and Jesus are cousins. They must’ve known each other as little boys. Did John not know until he baptized Jesus who he was? But even Jesus’ brothers and sisters did not understand who he was until they grew and after the crucifixion.

John later came to clear the way, to prepare the way and to get out of the way.

John was not known as the Reverend John T. Baptist DD. He was a prince among preachers, for John was heaven-sent.

Jesus didn’t come to personally fulfill our desires for health, wealth, good skin, trim abs, and personal success.

He came to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!

## PRAYER

Lord, let us be heard among the world. Let us be active witnesses, telling others to receive Our Father God who takes away all our sins! Hallelujah and Amen.

GINNY KUNTZ

# Thursday, March 6

## LUKE 2:41-49

*“Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing Him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for Him among their relatives and acquaintances, and when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for Him. After three days they found Him in the Temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. And when His parents saw Him they were astonished. And His mother said to Him, ‘Son, why have you treated us so? Behold your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.’ And He said to them, ‘Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?’” (LUKE 2:41-49 ESV)*

It was customary for Jewish parents to take their 12-year-old sons to the Temple at Festival time to prepare them for their impending bar mitzvahs (“son of the commandment”) when a boy is recognized as a man. On the journey home, Jesus was neither with the group of women and children nor with the men. Three days later, they found Him where a young man was least expected to be: with the Talmudic rabbis and professors who led graduate-level seminars in the Temple courts.

Jesus amazed the experts with His mature understanding of God's Word. And though He was always submissive to His mother and adoptive father, He reminded them that the Temple was the house of His true Father. It was not customary for Jews to speak of God as their father, but Jesus, on the threshold of legal adulthood, was already aware of His relationship as God's unique son.

## PRAYER

Dear Lord, let us always be mindful of our relationship with you, the Sovereign One. May Jesus, the Living Word of God, and the Holy Spirit who inspired your written word, enable us to clearly hear, see and understand all that you would have us to know. Amen.

RON BENEDICT

# Friday, March 7

## MATTHEW 4:18-21

*“While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them.”*  
(MATTHEW 4:18-21 ESV)

It’s a breezy day by the sea, and two fishermen, Simon Peter and Andrew, are tending their nets when Jesus walks up to them and tells them to follow Him, saying He would make them “fishers of men.” They immediately did! He saw two more fishermen, John and James, and called them, and they did. It’s an amazing thing that all four fishermen just did as He asked! They all knew that something special was happening! I’m not so sure that I would have just gone!

I felt God’s call on my life early on but I was afraid. He never let go, and at age 25, I accepted Him as my Savior and my life changed—as did the four fishermen. They would see miracles, hear His words, and find strength in themselves they never knew they had!

Isn’t it amazing that God calls the ordinary to witness and do the extraordinary? These four simple men would spread the Gospel everywhere! As would many others! Are we open to His calling?

## PRAYER

Dear Jesus, open our hearts to hear Your call on our lives so that we might do wonderful things for You! Amen.

CAROL A. HORNSBY

# Saturday, March 8

## LUKE 4:18-21

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’ And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’” (LUKE 4:18-21 ESV)*

When Jesus returned from Galilee, he was anointed not with oil or through the laying on of hands but by the Spirit of God. As he entered the synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth, Jesus commenced his ministry by reading from the book of Isaiah, thus fulfilling an Old Testament prophecy written over 700 years earlier. These words were intended to bring comfort and hope to those seeking the Messiah.

Jesus spoke to the Jews of his time, but let us not overlook the promises he shares with us by fulfilling this prophecy: He gives us a promise of reassurance that He will lift us out of a dark and lost world.

You now carry the fulfillment of this prophecy as you carry Christ in your hearts. You are anointed with the Spirit of God to preach the gospel to the poor and those around you. Through Jesus, you help to heal the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to those who are bound, and help people see that Jesus is the Messiah.

Jesus has blessed us with gifts so we can share his “Good News” with those who are trapped by sin and struggling in their personal lives. We are in Christ’s hands today in fulfilling this prophecy by expressing words of faith that glorify God to someone in need of God’s Love and comfort during difficult times.

## PRAYER

I pray, Heavenly Father, give me the courage to live the life you have made for me. And as I learn more from you, I will be able to speak to everyone about your love and mercy. As a witness for you, please give me the words to say in your name as I share your saving grace with others. Amen.

JAMES MARTIN

# First Sunday of Lent

SUNDAY, MARCH 9  
*Weekly Bible Reading Plan*

**SUNDAY, MARCH 9**

Philippians 2:1-11

**MONDAY, MARCH 10**

Isaiah 53:3-12

*The prophecy of the Suffering Servant, highlighting Christ's humility, suffering, and atoning sacrifice.*

**TUESDAY, MARCH 11**

John 13:12-17

*Jesus washing the disciples' feet, exemplifying servant leadership and humility.*

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12**

Matthew 20:25-28

*Jesus teaches that true greatness comes through serving others, just as He came to serve and give His life as a ransom.*

**THURSDAY, MARCH 13**

2 Corinthians 8:9

*Paul's reminder that Christ, though rich, became poor for our sake so that we might become spiritually rich.*

**FRIDAY, MARCH 14**

Hebrews 12:1-3

*Encouragement to fix our eyes on Jesus, who endured the cross and was exalted to the right hand of God.*

**SATURDAY, MARCH 15**

Colossians 1:15-20

*A passage on Christ's supremacy, showing how His humility led to His ultimate exaltation as Lord over all creation.*



# Monday, March 10

MARK 2:3-5, 11-12

*“Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’ ‘I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.’ He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, ‘We have never seen anything like this!’”*

(MARK 2:3-5, 11-12 NIV)

During Lent, we reflect on the power of faith and the healing that Christ offers. The faith of the paralyzed man’s friends moved Jesus to act. They overcame obstacles, tearing through the roof to bring their friend before Christ. Sometimes, we also have to negotiate obstacles that may seem insurmountable to get others into the presence of the Lord. At those times, we need to remember these gentlemen. Their faith wasn’t just belief; they proved their faith by taking action! We need to do the same. Note that Jesus first forgave the man’s sins, showing that spiritual healing is our greatest need. Then, in a powerful display of power and authority, He healed his body. Faith isn’t passive; it lifts, carries and perseveres. What obstacles are keeping you from bringing your family and friends to Jesus? We must trust Him to work in ways beyond what we can think or ask! This Lent, let us remember to carry others in prayer and faith, trusting that Jesus still heals and restores.

## PRAYER

Lord, strengthen our faith to bring others to you. Give us Holy boldness as we strive to fulfill the Great Commission. Amen.

RON WARNCKE, M.D.

# Tuesday, March 11

## MATTHEW 8:1-3

*“When Jesus came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, ‘Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.’ Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. ‘I am willing,’ he said. ‘Be clean!’ Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy.” (MATTHEW 8:1-3 NIV)*

As children of God, we are not guaranteed a life without disease, life-threatening situations, or unhappiness. We, ourselves or maybe a loved one, often encounter sickness or a situation that is too overwhelming. In this scripture, Matthew sees his first specific act of Jesus miraculously healing someone of a serious disease.

We read of Jesus bringing good news into the life of a leper, someone who was shunned and whose life had very little good in it. Healing him shows that the reign of an evil disease was taken away. Jesus shows us His power over sickness and teaches us that asking Him for help through prayer is important. We, as Christians, should be willing to reach out to others in need, as Jesus reached out to this leper. We should never underestimate the power of prayer, to ask God for help!!

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father, help us to pray in all situations, especially for those in need of your healing touch, whether it be sickness or just day-to-day living. May answered prayers show Your mercy and grace to them and to us. In your Son’s name, we pray and believe. Amen.

JAN WATSELL

# Wednesday, March 12

## MARK 5:2-3, 6-8

*“Jesus got out of the boat. A man controlled by an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. The man lived in the tombs. No one could keep him tied up anymore. Not even a chain could hold him. When he saw Jesus a long way off, he ran to him. He fell on his knees in front of him. He shouted at the top of his voice, ‘Jesus, Son of the Most High God, what do you want with me? Swear to God that you won’t hurt me!’ This was because Jesus had said to him, ‘Come out of this man, you evil spirit!’ (MARK 5:2-3, 6-8 NIRV)*

Jesus demonstrated His power and authority over life circumstances that still exist today - satanic activity. He commanded the evil spirit to leave the possessed man. The demon knew who Jesus was and begged Jesus to leave him alone.

Demons attack people because they hate the image of God in us. But their tactics are restricted with Christians because of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross. When we ask Jesus to be in our hearts, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us. So, when we are tempted to demonstrate sinful behavior, we can pray and resist the temptation with the help of the Holy Spirit.

For example, as hard as it is to imagine, ahem, I tend to have a quick temper. But, as I have grown in the fruits of the Spirit, I pray, and the Holy Spirit gives me self-control when I am faced with frustration. Thanks to Jesus and the help of the Holy Spirit, we are able to endure temptation and resist the influence of evil spirits!

## PRAYER

Dearest Heavenly Father, thank you so much for saving us from the evil one. In Jesus’ name, amen.

LYNN STEINKIRCHNER

# Thursday, March 13

JOHN 5:1-6, 8, 14-15

*“After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, ‘Do you want to be healed?’ Jesus said to him, ‘Get up, take up your bed, and walk.’ Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, ‘See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.’ The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.” (JOHN 5:1-6, 8, 14-15 ESV)*

After 38 years of trying, this man could not get into the healing waters of the pool fast enough. Jesus came by and told him, “Pick up your mat and walk.” When the Jews asked who cured him, he didn’t know. Jesus had disappeared into the crowd. Later, at the temple, Jesus told him that he needed to stop sinning now that he had been healed. When the man saw the Jews, he told them that it was Jesus Who had healed him.

To the man, it was a “happy time”. He was cured by Jesus. To the Jews, it was a sin to work on the Sabbath (carrying his mat was work).

## PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, Thank you for your healing powers in my life. Amen. Love and gratitude,

LOUISE WOLFER

# Friday, March 14

## MARK 10:46-47, 51-52

*“And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’ And Jesus said to him, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ And the blind man said to him, ‘Rabbi, let me recover my sight.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Go your way; your faith has made you well.’ And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.*

(MARK 10:46-47, 51-52 ESV)

Bartimaeus’ physical blindness drastically limited his life. He was reduced to roadside begging and was a social outcast. In his desperation, he called out to Jesus for help. But even those of us with perfect eyesight can have spiritual blind spots that limit our own lives. And there is no better cure than to ask Jesus to help us see our own shortcomings. We continually ask him to open our own eyes...

- Lord, how do we strengthen our family’s faith?
- Lord, please help us to understand your Word on a deeper level.
- Dearest Savior, help us not to judge people but to see them through your eyes.
- Please, Jesus, show us how to befriend those with very different viewpoints from ours.
- Lord, make us aware when a friend is hurting and show us how to help.

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father, Your Word teaches us that we can depend on Jesus for guidance in all things. When we are “stuck” in life, help us to remember that, like Bartimaeus, we simply need to ask in faith that our eyes be opened, and then, in joy and gratitude, follow Jesus! It is in His holy name we pray, Amen.

AMY & MIKE SCHNEIDER

# Saturday, March 15

## MATTHEW 12:9-13

*“Departing from there, He went into their synagogue. And a man was there whose hand was withered. And they questioned Jesus, asking, ‘Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?’—so that they might bring charges against Him. But He said to them, ‘What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable then is a person than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.’ Then He said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand!’ He stretched it out, and it was restored to normal, like the other.” (MATTHEW 12:9-13 NASB)*

This answer from Jesus, like many of His other answers, was probably frustrating for the Pharisees, who were hoping to catch Jesus breaking the Hebrew law. But for the man with the withered hand who received the gift of healing from Jesus that day, it was life-changing. For those who witnessed the healing, it built their faith. And for those, then and now, who seek to understand how to please God, Jesus provided a very helpful guideline. It is lawful, and even encouraged, to do good on the Sabbath!

In fact, it seems to me that the Sabbath is a **particularly good** time to engage in acts of kindness that may bring comfort or joy to others. What if I were to make it a habit to do at least one small kindness for someone **each Sunday**? Perhaps I can send a card to someone on the prayer list or call a friend that I haven’t spoken to in a long time. Or take cookies to a neighbor. Nothing I can do will make as much difference as what Jesus did that day. But when enough Christians each make a regular practice of prayerfully engaging in small acts of kindness, it adds up to a large wave of blessings on behalf of Jesus.

I know from being on the receiving end that there are already many acts of kindness being carried out by my LPC brothers and sisters, both through organized ministries and in response to individual nudges by the Holy Spirit. Let’s ask for a nudge each Sunday as we seek His direction for ways in which we can do good in His name on the Sabbath.

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for Jesus’s wisdom and His example. We ask that you reveal to each of us ways we can include in our Sabbath practices each week small acts of kindness that will show your love to others who may be in need of comfort or encouragement. Amen.

MARGE CUNNINGHAM

# Second Sunday of Lent

SUNDAY, MARCH 16  
*Weekly Bible Reading Plan*

**SUNDAY, MARCH 16**

Romans 3:21-31

**MONDAY, MARCH 17**

Genesis 15:6

*“Abram believed the Lord, and He credited it to him as righteousness.”  
Paul references this to show that righteousness comes by faith, not works.*

**TUESDAY, MARCH 18**

John 1:16-17

*“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through  
Jesus Christ.” Shows the shift from law to grace in Christ.*

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19**

Habakkuk 2:4

*“The righteous will live by faith.” This foundational Old Testament  
verse is quoted by Paul to emphasize justification by faith alone.*

**THURSDAY, MARCH 20**

John 3:16-17

*Jesus’ declaration that salvation comes through faith in Him,  
reinforcing Paul’s teaching on righteousness through faith.*

**FRIDAY, MARCH 21**

Ephesians 2:8-9

*Paul reiterates that salvation is by grace through faith,  
not by works, echoing the themes of Romans 3.*

**SATURDAY, MARCH 22**

Galatians 2:15-16

*Paul directly states that no one is justified by works of the law but only  
through faith in Jesus Christ, reinforcing his argument in Romans 3.*

# Monday, March 17

## MATTHEW 15:22-28

*“A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, ‘Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly.’ Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, ‘Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.’ He answered, ‘I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.’ The woman came and knelt before him. ‘Lord, help me!’ she said. He replied, ‘It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.’ ‘Yes it is, Lord,’ she said. ‘Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.’ Then Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.’ And her daughter was healed at that moment.” (MATTHEW 15:22-28 NIV)*

At first glance, this story seems like Jesus was being rather uncaring and dismissive of this woman. Other times, when approached, He was caring, attentive and welcoming. What was different here? Why would He not listen and heal her daughter?

The Canaanites were a perverse people and an ancient enemy of Israel. In their religion, they sacrificed children, practiced temple prostitution and refused to repent and turn to God. Jesus’ first statement that He “was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel” shows this woman was not considered part of His flock. Then, He infers she is a dog and not entitled to His ministry. But she takes no offense and persists.

In her persistence, she humbles herself and acknowledges Him as “son of David.” This was a messianic title that the Jews reserved for the legitimate king of Israel. Why would a Canaanite call Him such? Her insistence that He help her and her acknowledgment of His identity showed she was willing to believe in someone she had no visible proof of, someone who should not even accept her and help her.

Jesus could have simply listened to the woman’s plea, healed her daughter and gone on – but He didn’t. By highlighting that she was a gentile and culturally perverse to Him, Jesus showed quite clearly that He was here to minister to not only the Jews but to all people. This was a radical idea back then.

We have the benefit of knowing that Jesus is the Son of God and our Savior. How can we then, in good conscience, not treat each other with the kindness and forgiveness Jesus showed everyone?

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we acknowledge that we are sometimes unkind and unforgiving of people we perceive as different from ourselves. Help us to be more inclusive and caring of those in need of knowing you. We pray in Jesus’ name, Amen.

VICKI DALZELLE



# Tuesday, March 18

## MATTHEW 8:5-13

*“When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. ‘Lord,’ he said, ‘my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Shall I come and heal him?’ The centurion replied, ‘Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, “Go,” and he goes; and that one, “Come,” and he comes. I say to my servant, “Do this,” and he does it.’ When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, ‘Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ Then Jesus said to the centurion, ‘Go! Let it be done just as you believed it would.’ And his servant was healed at that moment.” (MATTHEW 8:5-13 NIV)*

At the time of this event, John the Baptist was imprisoned, and Jesus went into Galilee and started his ministry. He had called His disciples, been rejected in Nazareth, taught very large crowds, preached the ‘sermon on the mount,’ and healed many people. He was already well-known throughout the region. This Centurion had obviously heard about Him and maybe saw Him healing others... Matthew relates that Jesus asked the centurion one of His typical questions—what do you want me to do for you? Because of his answer, Jesus places the centurion among the superlative few. As He had declared John the greatest among men, He now declares that He has not found “anyone in Israel with such great faith.” This Roman has more faith than any of His own people!

The Centurion had complete faith in Jesus’s authority. When we pray, is it with such confidence in God’s power? We have been given overwhelming examples of His answers to our prayers, and His word tells of His infinite love. What more do we need to have the faith of a Centurion?

## PRAYER

Our Father, faith is a gift from you. We pray confidently that you will anoint us with faith.  
Amen.

JOE MCKENZIE

# Wednesday, March 19

## MATTHEW 14:25-31

*“Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. ‘It’s a ghost,’ they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: ‘Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.’ ‘Lord, if it’s you,’ Peter replied, ‘tell me to come to you on the water.’ ‘Come,’ he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, ‘Lord, save me!’ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. ‘You of little faith,’ he said, ‘why did you doubt?’” (MATTHEW 14:25-31 NIV)*

Peter is one of our favorite disciples, always wanting to be near Jesus and love him. Like Peter, we all get excited about what God is doing and want to be near Him. Getting out of the boat wasn't hard for Peter, but keeping his eyes on Jesus and not the wind and waves was. In our own lives, we often want to do God's will, but the struggles and heartaches of life hinder us. Isn't it wonderful to always remember when that happens, all we have to do is cry out, "Lord save us," and he will reach out His hand and save us, just like Peter.

Even after Peter denied Him three times, when the Lord came back after His resurrection, He still loved Peter and told him to feed His sheep. John 21: 15-19. Jesus never gave up on Peter, and He will never give up on us. PTL.

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father, may we get out of the boat and follow hard after you, not letting situations and circumstances stop us from doing your will, even if we have to do it being afraid. Trusting you to hold us and help us to accomplish your will. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DICK & DONNA KAUFMAN

# Thursday, March 20

## MARK 5:25-34

*“And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. For she said, ‘If I touch even his garments, I will be made well.’ And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, ‘Who touched my garments?’ And his disciples said to him, ‘You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, “Who touched me?”’ And he looked around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. And he said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.’” (MARK 5:25-34 ESV)*

This passage always recalls an incident that happened on a mission trip in Mexico. We were working in a village in rough open country about two hours from base camp. One morning, I was not feeling well, and although I hated to stay back, I did. Later, feeling better, I roamed around the village with my nurse friend, Femia. I felt better as the day progressed and assumed that I would join the group the next day. But the next morning, I felt worse and reluctantly stayed back again. After a time, Femia and I returned to a very poor house because I kept having a nagging feeling about the woman, Inocencia, who lived there. The day before, her eyes had seemed very sunken and her manner listless. Questioning her more closely, she said although it was February, she said she had been bleeding since Christmas. She had no money for the doctor. I said I would pay, and we soon discovered that she was suffering from a miscarriage that had not expelled, and that she was slowly bleeding to death. The clinic was not equipped to give her the level of care she needed. Things happened very quickly after that. A van was secured, and Femia and her husband, Ulises, took Inocencia to a larger hospital. Even so, for the Maya in Mexico, it sometimes takes days to be seen. But as they were standing in a long line, a female gynecologist saw them and said, “Femia, what are you doing here?” Inocencia was whisked right in and examined. The next problem was the blood transfusion. In Mexico, you must either pay for blood or replace it unit by unit. Several of the villagers stepped up to donate, and we paid for the rest--12 units of blood before she could even be operated on.

That was many years ago. Today, when she sees me, she laughs and chatters away in Maya. I have witnessed various healings on mission trips, and each is a little different. But this one echoes the desperation of the woman who touched Christ's robe, reminding me that the Lord is always faithful even when I am slow to understand how he uses us to be “his robe” for others.

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father and Great Physician, thank you for creating wonderful and intricate earthly bodies in your image, medical personnel who are trained and gifted to heal us, and in the end, heavenly bodies that will be healed of all pain and disease. Amen.

INGA KIMPLE

# Friday, March 21

## MARK 9:17, 21-25

*“A man in the crowd answered, ‘Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. Jesus asked the boy’s father, ‘How long has he been like this?’ ‘From childhood,’ he answered. ‘It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.’ ‘‘If you can?’’ said Jesus. ‘Everything is possible for one who believes.’ Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, ‘I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!’ When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. ‘You deaf and mute spirit,’ he said, ‘I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.’” (MARK 9:17, 21-25 NIV)*

Many times today, people struggle to know Jesus fully. We think we understand His power and glory but don’t always believe. When the boy’s father came to Jesus, he had heard accounts of Miracles performed by Jesus, and he believed the stories he had heard. The loving father was heartbroken and desperate for the healing of his son. He came to Jesus and asked Him to heal his son from an evil spirit. He was almost challenging Him by saying, “If you can do anything.” Jesus challenges the father by saying everything is possible for the one who believes. This opens the eyes of the boy’s father and shows Him the true power and glory of Jesus. These few verses in Mark teach us to truly believe and know Jesus. When we do, our eyes are opened, and we see that everything is possible through Him.

## PRAYER

Dear God,

Thank you for your Word, which shows us who you are and guides our hearts. Help us to commit to truly knowing you and to serve your kingdom, never lacking in zeal, but keeping your spiritual fervor. We love you, Amen.

KAI EARLEY

# Saturday, March 22

## LUKE 17:12-19

*“And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices, saying, ‘Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.’ When he saw them he said to them, ‘Go and show yourselves to the priests.’ And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus answered, ‘Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?’ And he said to him, ‘Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.’” (LUKE 17:12-19)*

Jesus encounters ten lepers while en route to Jerusalem. This is likely the last time He will pass this way, as He will soon be crucified. They cry out, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!” Even in this remote village, they recognize Jesus and reach out in their hopelessness and despair to be healed. Jesus doesn’t touch them or even come near them but instead commands they go show themselves to the priests. Though unhealed, they would be in due time, and the priests would be able to declare them clean as required by the Law. Yet, historians tell us in Jesus’ day, there is no record of anyone in Israel ever showing themselves to a priest after being healed of leprosy. Leprosy was incurable. No one ever recovered—except those Jesus healed. Do you think the nine ever presented themselves to the priests?

Didn’t all ten lepers exercise faith for Jesus to heal them? We’re told they were all healed. Why was the despised Samaritan the only one to return and offer his gratitude? Could it be because he now possessed a saving faith? When Jesus dismisses the Samaritan after he threw himself at His feet and thanked Him, He says, “Rise and go: your faith has made you well.” This can also be translated as “Your faith has saved you.”

A saving faith goes beyond knowing who Jesus is and believing He is the Son of God. James says even demons possess this much faith. To have saving faith requires we add to our knowledge and belief a personal trust and reliance in Christ as Savior. Someone with a grateful heart who truly loved and trusted in Jesus would have had no problem turning around to thank Him for making that day the most joyful and significant in his entire existence. Jesus showed us, through one the Jews would describe as unclean and despicable, how all of us should express our love and devotion to God for what He did at Calvary and does for us today.

## PRAYER

Dear Lord, Far too often, we are ungrateful! Instead of curing our leprosy, You provided a cure for sin! Grant us grateful hearts. Let us not be as the nine but like the Samaritan. May we acknowledge with thanksgiving the extravagant grace and kindness you bestow upon us, your unworthy children, each and every day. AMEN.

STEVE NEWBY

# Third Sunday of Lent

SUNDAY, MARCH 23  
*Weekly Bible Reading Plan*

**SUNDAY, MARCH 23**

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

**MONDAY, MARCH 24**

Ezekiel 36:26-27

*God's promise to give His people a new heart and spirit, foreshadowing the transformation described in 2 Corinthians 5:17 ("new creation").*

**TUESDAY, MARCH 25**

Isaiah 61:1-3

*A prophecy about the Messiah's mission to restore and heal, which aligns with our calling as ambassadors of reconciliation.*

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26**

Luke 15:11-32

*(The Parable of the Prodigal Son) – A powerful illustration of God's reconciling love and grace toward sinners.*

**THURSDAY, MARCH 27**

Ephesians 2:13-18

*Describes how Christ's sacrifice brings reconciliation between God and humanity, as well as between Jews and Gentiles.*

**FRIDAY, MARCH 28**

Galatians 2:20

*Paul's declaration that he has been crucified with Christ and now lives in Him, reflecting the transformation of the new creation.*

**SATURDAY, MARCH 29**

Colossians 1:19-22

*Describes how Christ's death on the cross reconciles all things to God, making peace through His blood.*

# Monday, March 24

## JOHN 4:7-26

*“A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give me a drink.’ (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samira? (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, “Give me a drink,” you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. The woman said to him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come here.’ The woman answered him, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You are right in saying, “I have no husband”; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.’ The woman said to him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am he.’” (JOHN 4:7-26 ESV)*

Samaritans of Jesus’ day were despised by Jews. They disagreed on many things, including their ancestry and interpretation of the Torah (the first 5 books of the Bible).

When the Samaritan woman approaches the well, she is in total shock that a Jew would have the nerve to speak to her. She asks a great question, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samira?” Imagine her shock at Jesus’ response “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” She starts to think of the one promised in the Torah, eventually leading her to discover that this Jew is the Messiah.

My takeaway. Uncovering common ground can lead to a world of discovery about Jesus’ truths.

## PRAYER

Dear Father, Where there is hate, may we sow love. Amen.

# Tuesday, March 25

## MATTHEW 9:1-8

*“And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city. And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, ‘Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.’ And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, ‘This man is blaspheming.’ But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, ‘Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, “Your sins are forgiven,” or to say, “Rise and walk”? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins’—he then said to the paralytic— ‘Rise, pick up your bed and go home.’ And he rose and went home. When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.”*(MATTHEW 9:1-8 ESV)

Walking. We seriously take it for granted. Some, such as this paralytic mentioned in Matthew 9, learn to live with the inability to walk. Most aren't so lucky to have faithful friends carry them around, though. This man, who had probably been looked down upon his whole life, knew nothing else and couldn't do anything about it. Not until Jesus.

“Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.” Says Jesus to this man.

Again, God is using someone unexpected and someone even ignored and looked down upon to spread the good news of Jesus Christ our Lord.

God moves in mysterious ways.

How can or has God worked in your life?

“Rise, pick up your bed and go home.’ And he rose and went home.”

He can use you, even by walking.

## PRAYER

Lord, show us your way in our lives. Help us to radiate Jesus' love in our lives and help others to notice that love through us. Continue to grow us in your way. We love you and praise you.  
AMEN.

JONATHAN MOORE



# Wednesday, March 26

## JOHN 8:2-11

*“Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and placing her in the midst they said to him, ‘Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?’ This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, ‘Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.’ And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus stood up and said to her, ‘Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?’ She said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said, ‘Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.’” (JOHN 8:2-11 ESV)*

Several years ago, I was asked to give a presentation at the Ohio Women’s Reformatory because I had taken a humanitarian trip, and a group within the prison had made a significant contribution to the NGO that had made that possible. I was greeted in the old auditorium by about 50 women who were in the ‘30 Years to Life’ club, all members serving hard time for serious offenses. To raise money, the club took pictures on visitors’ day, thus giving other women the chance to have photos of their children. They used part of their proceeds to have holiday parties but were also encouraged to ‘give back,’ and this year, they had chosen my organization. I was shown a list of past recipients and was taken aback that I was the first person ever to respond to them. No one else had even written, much less visited. In my slide show presentation, there were many women and children, and I told them how their money had helped in a third-world country. I also told them that although the NGO was secular, my personal belief in Jesus had led me to volunteer and how Jesus had responded to the poor and to children. Visitors and prisoners aren’t allowed to touch, but that day, after the presentation, there were many hugs and ‘God bless yous’ on both sides.

Surely, these forgotten women have committed grievous sins as bad or worse than the adulterous woman, but I believe that many have reflected and repented of their past actions, and even if they are never again free, they are trying to make a difference in the world. When I left, they gave me a goody bag of various small items, but the most precious was a large handmade card with their best wishes and signatures, one which read, ‘Thank you for remembering misfits like us.’

## PRAYER

Dear Lord, help us to see that by judging others while declaring ourselves righteous, we are casting the first stone. May we instead see each person we meet through your eyes, making us aware we are all misfits in one form or another, saved only by grace. Amen.

# Thursday, March 27

## LUKE 6:27-33

*“But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.’ If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.”*  
(LUKE 6:27-33 ESV)

Boy, isn't this scripture counter-cultural? The messaging we receive is to focus on our rights and what we deserve and promote self-care. The Christian life calls us to not only be kind to those who are not kind to us but to ignore those who are mean to us and not lash back. Rather we are to bless those who are against us, to pray for them, to give them the shirt off our back. I don't know about you, but when I do this, I feel like a chump, like I'm getting walked on. It can be bad for my sense of self-worth. Yet, this is what we are called to do. I guess the ultimate "chump" was Jesus as He hung on the cross. I find that if I tap into the loving acceptance that Christ has for me, then I am able to let others go before me. When I spend enough time with the Lord, then I am acutely aware that my self-worth comes from being a child of God; it comes from the grace of God. My self-worth doesn't stem from the spoils of this world, and when I am grounded in that, then I can have the proper servant attitude. An attitude that allows me to be gracious to others, others who may "deserve" something according to the world's economy or even according to God's economy.

## PRAYER

Lord, help me to focus on you so that I have the strength and courage to show acceptance of others, even those who are against me. Help me to be close enough to You so that You are in me, and then others are able to see You in me. Amen.

NED EARLEY

# Friday, March 28

LUKE 7:36-38, 44-48

*“One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee’s house and reclined at table. And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, ‘Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.’ And he said to her, ‘Your sins are forgiven.’” (LUKE 7:36-38, 44-48)*

We often find ourselves in a similar position as this woman—broken, lost, and searching for refuge.

Think about the first time you truly understood who Jesus was and how His mercy changed you. Did you feel gratitude? Was your heart overwhelmed by His glory and surpassing peace? When we come to Jesus in our brokenness, He receives us fully and washes away every sin. This sinful woman expressed her gratitude by humbling herself to kiss and wash Jesus’ feet with her tears, wiping them away with her hair, and anointing His feet with perfume, signs of hospitality and honor.

Consider how you let Jesus’ glory be dimmed in your eyes like the Pharisee. He was blind to who Jesus was and couldn’t bring himself to serve Christ like this woman did. How can you remind yourself of the beauty that we live for a savior who’s redeemed us and deserves all praise and admiration daily?

## PRAYER

Dear Lord, we thank you for the gift that is your holy, perfect son, Jesus, and the sacrifice He made so that we may have a relationship with you. We ask that you keep our hearts humble so that we can honor and remember all that you’ve done for our sake. Thank you for your Word and all that you’ve provided. In your name, Jesus Christ, amen.

CATHERINE PIERETT

# Saturday, March 29

## MATTHEW 18:21-22

*“Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, ‘Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?’ Jesus answered, ‘I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.’”*(MATTHEW 18:21-22 NIV)

OUR LENTEN THEME KNOWING JESUS TOGETHER should be something we strive for. Philippians 2:2 “Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.” At Pentecost all the people were in one accord and in one place. Knowing Jesus together is straightforward... knowing Jesus means we know God the Father. Jesus is the son of God & represents God’s glory & being. Let us treasure Christ together because He is more valuable than all else.

Today’s scripture finds Peter asking Jesus how many times should we forgive. Jesus responded that forgiveness should be offered 490 times, far beyond that which Peter was proposing, and it must have stunned the disciples who were listening. Although they had been with Jesus for some time, they were still thinking in the limited terms of the law, rather than in the unlimited terms of grace.

By saying we are to forgive those who sin against us 70x7, Jesus was not limiting forgiveness to 490 times, a number that is, for all practical purposes, beyond counting. Christians with forgiving hearts not only do not limit the number of times they forgive; we are to continue to forgive with as much grace the thousandth time as we do the first time. Christians are only capable of this type of forgiving spirit because the Spirit of God lives within us, and it is He who provides the ability to offer forgiveness over and over, just as God forgives us over and over.

## PRAYER

Lord, right now I bow my head & my heart in humble adoration of your glory. I want my whole life to make a difference to others & I am pleading for your mercy & grace to move me into your plan for my life. I feel that I want to be Jesus to someone today. Make fresh that first love I had for you. Renew me, Lord, through my prayer & reading your Word. Amen.

All Glory to God!

You might want to consider J. I. Packer’s book, *Knowing God*.

JOHN & FRAN MORRIS

# Fourth Sunday of Lent

SUNDAY, MARCH 30  
*Weekly Bible Reading Plan*

**SUNDAY, MARCH 30**

Romans 5:6-11

**MONDAY, MARCH 31**

John 15:13

*“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”  
This reflects Christ’s sacrificial love, as mentioned in Romans 5:8.*

**TUESDAY, APRIL 1**

1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

*Jesus’ death and resurrection delivers us from  
the wrath of God at the final judgment.*

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2**

Ephesians 2:4-5

*Paul speaks of God’s great love and mercy, making  
us alive in Christ even when we were dead in sin.*

**THURSDAY, APRIL 3**

1 John 4:9-10

*God’s love is revealed in sending His Son as an atoning sacrifice, reinforcing  
the message of love demonstrated through the cross in Romans 5:8.*

**FRIDAY, APRIL 4**

Titus 3:4-7

*Speaks of salvation not by our works but by God’s mercy,  
through the washing and renewal of the Holy Spirit.*

**SATURDAY, APRIL 5**

Hebrews 9:12-14

*Christ’s blood secures eternal redemption, cleansing us  
from sin and making reconciliation with God possible.*

# Monday, March 31

## MARK 1:21-22, 27

*“They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, ‘What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.’” (MARK 1:21-22, 27 NIV)*

It’s easy for us to know and follow Jesus. We came along about 2000 years later. There has been a lot of groundwork laid for us.

Think about the early church or even before the early church. Folks were seeing Jesus and hearing about him for the first time. He was something or should I say someone new. They had been waiting for Him for years. Even though He was the Messiah, He didn’t display the royalty that they were expecting. He was a humble man. Lived in humble conditions. He directed every bit of himself towards getting others to know and recognize Him as the son of God and teach them how to live their lives the way God wanted them to.

How fortunate we are to already know Him. Many of us grew up in a Church or grew up in the U.S., which is a Christian nation. Even if we didn’t go to church, Christian values were all around us.

It is awesome that we live in the greatest country in the history of the world. We are free to know Him, worship Him and tell others about Him. We need to do that at each and every opportunity. By showing care, love and respect to others, even those you don’t know, just might open the door for you to talk to them about Jesus.

## PRAYER

Dear Father, please give me the strength and direction to do as you did and show others what it looks like to be a Christian. Give me the words to tell others about you and how wonderful it is to know and follow you. Amen!

BERNIE UCHTMAN

# Tuesday, April 1

LUKE 10:25-29, 30-37

*“And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, ‘Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ He said to him, ‘What is written in the Law? How do you read it?’ And he answered, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.’ And he said to him, ‘You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.’ But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’ Jesus replied, ‘A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’” Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?’ He said, ‘The one who showed him mercy.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘You go, and do likewise.’”*  
(LUKE 10:25-29, 30-37 ESV)

The expert in the law asks Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?” But beneath his question is something deeper—he isn’t looking for understanding; he’s looking for a way to justify himself—to find a loophole. He wants a limit, a boundary that defines love in a way he can manage. Jesus refuses to let him off the hook.

The parable of the Good Samaritan is more than a call to kindness—it is a revelation of God’s radical grace. The priest and the Levite, the religious insiders, walk past the wounded man. But the Samaritan, an outsider, stops. He sacrifices time, money, and comfort to show mercy.

But here’s the deeper truth: we are not merely called to be the Good Samaritan; first, we must recognize that we are the wounded traveler. Sin has left us helpless, and Christ, the true Good Samaritan, has come at infinite cost to heal and restore us. Only when we grasp how we’ve been loved can we love without loopholes.

## PRAYER

Lord, let me see my own need for Your mercy, that I might extend the same grace to others. Teach me to love not out of duty, but in response to the love You have lavished on me. Amen.

ANDREW JOHNSON

# Wednesday, April 2

## LUKE 12:13-21

*“Someone in the crowd said to him, ‘Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.’ But he said to him, ‘Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?’ And he said to them, ‘Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.’ And he told them a parable, saying, ‘The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, “What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?” And he said, “I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’” But God said to him, “Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?” 21 So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.” (LUKE 12:13-21 ESV)*

The fear of not being in control of my future is something of which I’ve always struggled. I know logically that God will take care of my daily needs because He promises this. Yet, emotionally, I want to have a secure and comfortable future, and having an abundance provides this safety net.

But it is this extra ... this abundance ...that I believe this parable is bringing to our attention.

The rich man’s wealth not only met his current needs but his future needs, which now required extensive resources to protect it. All, just in time, for God to take it all away from him in death.

He didn’t need security. He needed Jesus.

I do not know when I will take my last breath, but God does. And if I can trust him with my eternal life, then I know I can trust Him with my mere mortal life.

## PRAYER

Lord, remind me that I don’t need to store my riches on Earth. You are my security and comfort. You are my forever safety net. Amen.

BETH GULLY



# Thursday, April 3

## JOHN 3:1-11

*“Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, ‘Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.’ Jesus answered him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?’ Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, “You must be born again.” The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.’ Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can these things be?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony.”* (JOHN 3:1-11 ESV)

Nicodemus, as a Pharisee and leader of the Sanhedrin, strictly followed the written Jewish laws and traditions. But as a strident “seeker of God” he had heard Jesus’ teachings and probably witnessed some of his miracles. Nicodemus recognized that Jesus was “special,” sent from God, and wanted to know more. He arranged to meet with Jesus privately, trying to avoid any distractions so he could understand Jesus’ teachings. Unfortunately the Bible doesn’t provide any more information about Nicodemus except to confirm that he was a Jesus follower. He shows his devotion to Jesus further on in John’s gospel at Jesus’ burial.

Since I became a Jesus follower at age 13, and then a “returner” in 1992, I have continued to grow deeper in my faith and more hungry for knowledge to help me become more like Jesus. My growth comes from Bible reading, prayer, topical studies, and many interactions and discussions with fellow believers.

(To have the opportunity to talk with Jesus face to face, as Nicodemus did, and learn from him will remain an unfulfilled dream of mine until the next chapter of my life begins in heaven.)

## PRAYER

Dear Lord, thank you for today and the opportunity to get to know you better. With all the distractions associated with daily life, you help me keep focused on your teachings every day. Help me to be open-minded to what you would have me learn, so I can grow in my relationship with you. In your precious name, I pray. Amen.

LARRY BRACEY

# Friday, April 4

## MARK 12: 28-34

*“One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, ‘Of all the commandments, which is the most important?’ ‘The most important one,’ answered Jesus, ‘is this: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” The second is this: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” There is no commandment greater than these.’ ‘Well said, teacher,’ the man replied. ‘You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.’ When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.’ And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.*  
(MARK 12: 28-34 NIV)

As a teacher, I confess that teachers sometimes ask “gotcha” questions. And sometimes teachers, when posing a question, will call on a student that the teacher knows will give a good or correct answer. The former was the case with Sadducees. The latter seems to be the case with the teacher of the law in today’s scripture. The teacher of the law noticed that Jesus had given a good answer in the debate with the Sadducees, who were posing “trick” questions mired in suppositional cases (verses 18-27). So, he posed a more serious question, one designed to get to the central tenet of the Jewish faith.

Jesus responded by quoting Deuteronomy 6: 4-5, the Mezuzah. The word literally means “doorpost,” and it’s a door ornament that fulfills the commandment for Jews to post these words at the entrance to their homes. Mezuzahs have two purposes: they remind those entering and leaving the house of the covenant between God and the Jewish people, and they identify one’s dwelling as a Jewish household.

The teacher of the law said that he was satisfied with Christ’s response. When Jesus notes that the teacher is “not far from the kingdom of God,” He signals that this commandment applies to us as we follow Jesus. Following this commandment as we seek the Kingdom of God is easier said than done. Loving God with ALL our being, loving our neighbor (which means “EVERY-ONE”), and loving people to Christ. It’s a commitment, a vow, a promise that can only be kept by the grace of God, the practice of prayer, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the example of our Christian brothers and sisters.

## PRAYER

Jesus, you have told us that we are to “seek first the Kingdom of God,” and you tell us that doing so requires that we love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind and with all our strength. We confess that we are not capable of following this commandment by our own power. Come, Holy Spirit, and empower us to follow our Savior’s command. Amen.

NINA DORSCH

# Saturday, April 5

## JOHN 14:23-26

*“Jesus replied, ‘Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. ‘All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.’” (JOHN 14:23-26 NIV)*

For the past five years, my two grown daughters and I have taken trips to national parks where we take on the challenge of climbing those treacherous mountain trails. From the Rockies to the Canadian Beehive Mt. to the New Zealand Key Summit, we have pushed ourselves both physically and mentally out of our comfort zone to strive to reach the top.

As we plan for our hikes, we make use of modern-day tech--YouTube, podcasts, All Trails app and even GPS to navigate those rocky terrains. From the glistening bowl lakes to raging waterfalls and lush mountain meadows, the technology we use helps show us the way.

It’s easy to think “I got this! We’re prepared.” But...how often do we stop to pray? Jesus promised us the most fantastic resource imaginable--the Holy Spirit. He is our counselor, comforter, helper, advocate, and even our trail guide.

Isaiah 42:16 has become my life verse. “I will lead the blind by ways they have not known..... along unfamiliar paths will I guide them. I will turn darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth.”

Yes, we can rely on the Holy Spirit to get us to the end of the trail safe and sound. No app is going to give you all that!

## PRAYER

Oh Lord, amid all the gadgets and tech that I enjoy, help me to remember its the indwelling Holy Spirit, who is my greatest source of guidance. He will point us to the paths God wants us to follow. Amen.

HARRIET SMITH

# Fifth Sunday of Lent

SUNDAY, APRIL 6  
*Weekly Bible Reading Plan*

**SUNDAY, APRIL 6**

Colossians 2:8-15

**MONDAY, APRIL 7**

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

*Warns against deceptive philosophies and urges believers to take every thought captive to Christ, aligning with Colossians 2:8.*

**TUESDAY, APRIL 8**

Hebrews 2:14-15

*Declares that through His death, Jesus destroyed the power of the devil and freed those enslaved by the fear of death, echoing Colossians 2:15.*

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9**

John 8:31-32

*Jesus says, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free," countering the deceptive philosophies warned against in Colossians 2:8.*

**THURSDAY, APRIL 10**

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

*Paul contrasts worldly wisdom with the power of the cross, reinforcing Colossians 2:8's warning about human traditions.*

**FRIDAY, APRIL 11**

Romans 8:1-2

*Declares that there is no condemnation for those in Christ because the law of the Spirit has set us free, aligning with Colossians 2:14.*

**SATURDAY, APRIL 12**

Revelation 1:17-18

*Jesus proclaims that He is the Living One who was dead but is now alive forever, holding the keys to death and Hades—reflecting His triumph in Colossians 2:15.*

# Monday, April 7

## LUKE 7:11-17

*“Soon afterward he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, ‘Do not weep.’ Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, ‘Young man, I say to you, arise.’ And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, ‘A great prophet has arisen among us!’ and ‘God has visited his people!’ And this report about him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.” (LUKE 7:11-17 ESV)*

A Gospel Encounter Experience: First despair, meditation, reflection, introspection, THEN hope and assurance. A friend recounted a life-changing event. She was a lifelong regular church attender and a young mother and wife. Then, suddenly, unexpectedly, her husband died, and an extended period of grieving, isolation, and anguish ensued. She was sure that God had abandoned her, and she was angry! Through the next months, she rejected support and care. But, through her depression, one day, she prayed to Jesus for help. It was inspiring when she told me, “I now know that I left God, but He never left me”! Hope and healing have ensued. Praise be to the Lord! There are many similar experiences, including my own, when a grievous loss tests our capacity to trust and hold fast to Jesus. I see in my friend’s story one more confirmation that Jesus is there for us, regardless of the time it takes. We are called to support others by being an example through sharing the truth and assurance of Jesus’ saving love.

## PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, Please strengthen our will to love one another, while there is yet time.  
In Jesus name, Amen.

RITA POTH

# Tuesday, April 8

## MARK 10:17-21

*“And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, ‘Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: “Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.”’ And he said to him, ‘Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.’ And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, ‘You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.’” (MARK 10:17-21 ESV)*

I believe this man had a privileged position in his community. Probably born into a family of wealth. He was educated in religion and the commandments since he stated he kept them in his youth. Jesus knew when he called Him Good Teacher that this young man had no awareness of His divine nature. When he asked him “what can I do,” he clearly believed that good works are all that are needed for eternal life. How many of us today believe the same thing? How many put work/money before God? When Jesus asked him to give all that he had to the poor and follow Him. He walked away. By walking away, this young man failed to keep the most important commandment: you should have no other God before me. By reflecting on this scripture, we gain a deeper understanding of the importance of placing God at the center of our lives.

## PRAYER

Dear Father, Help us to recognize the things of this world that interfere with our true purpose to follow you daily. Give us the ability to show everyone we encounter your love and peace through our words and actions. Amen.

CAROLYN LUCKE

# Wednesday, April 9

## MATTHEW 8:1-6

*“When Jesus came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, ‘Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.’ Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. ‘I am willing,’ he said. ‘Be clean!’ Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. Then Jesus said to him, ‘See that you don’t tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.’ When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. ‘Lord,’ he said, ‘my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly.’” (MATTHEW 8:1-6 NIV)*

A leper knelt before Jesus and asked for healing. A centurion asked for healing for his servant. Both understood who Jesus was. They did not question Jesus’ ability to heal. They knew Jesus was ABLE. They both asked Jesus if he was WILLING to heal. That was bold Faith!

The leper was an outcast, an unclean person. The centurion was the enemy! Jesus had compassion for both.

When we pray, we are not asking Jesus if he CAN, but Jesus, WILL you answer my prayer? Big difference!

Jesus, I know you are able. Are you willing to answer my prayer?

Are you afraid to ask Jesus for anything? Why be afraid? Jesus loves bold Faith.

Feel unworthy to pray? Feel unclean? Again, be bold! Humble yourself like the leper and centurion, and PRAY! Have faith in Jesus’ willingness to answer genuine prayer. You are not an outsider. You are a child of God.

Have bold faith! Jesus willingly answers prayers!

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I pray to have bold faith, faith that can move mountains. Yours is the Kingdom, Power, and Glory forever. In your precious Son’s name, Jesus, Amen.

LARRY OURY

# Thursday, April 10

## LUKE 21:1-3

*“As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. ‘Truly I tell you,’ he said, ‘this poor widow has put in more than all the others.’” (LUKE 21:1-3 NIV)*

There was a time in my life when money was tight, and I struggled with making sure there was enough on the table to eat. I attended church regularly and gave what I thought I could spare.

One Sunday, the preacher’s message was about sacrificial giving. I felt uncomfortable. I was ready to give the couple of dollars I had in my wallet that day, but hidden in my pocket was a twenty-dollar bill I had saved to take my kids out for a special treat at McDonald’s Play Place.

The preacher’s message kept nagging at me. There was a small voice that whispered that I should give willingly and gladly out of my love of God all that I could, not just what I could spare. I prayed as the plate was passed and finally came to my pew. The Spirit of God put a sense of peace in me as I pulled the twenty from my pocket and laid it gently in the collection plate.

After church, I collected my son and daughter from “kids church.” They ran happily toward me, waving red coupons with golden arches on them. That day, unbeknownst to me, the children were all given McDonald’s coupons!

The lesson I learned that day was clear: God notices our sacrifices, God values the spirit in which we give our offering to Him, and we can always trust in God’s promises to love and care for us.

## PRAYER

Dear Lord, may I learn to give sacrificially, trusting that you will provide for all my needs. Instill in me a spirit of grateful willingness, knowing that every act of generosity is an opportunity to bless others and honor you. Amen.

LORRIE PENNER



# Friday, April 11

## LUKE 19:1-9

*“He entered Jericho and was passing through. And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.’ So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all grumbled, ‘He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.’ And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, ‘Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham.’” (LUKE 19:1-9 ESV)*

I’m pretty sure Zacchaeus knew he was a sinner. I’m sure he had been reminded of that quite often. I don’t think he thought Jesus would even look at him. But Jesus chose him! We are not privy to the conversation that took place in the home of Zacchaeus, but when he experienced the undeserved forgiveness of God, his whole life was changed. Did he remain a tax collector? We don’t know, but instead of wanting to gain money, he is giving half of his goods away and restoring any falsely appropriated goods fourfold. His response is to totally turn around – he had repented!

Have you experienced the undeserved forgiveness of God? I have. There is nothing in me that could possibly be worth that kind of love. And yet... that is the love God has for us. What will your response be?

## PRAYER

Father, thank you for your inexpressible gift of forgiveness and salvation through Jesus. Help me to always remember that I am not my own. It was bought at a very precious cost. Amen.

KAREN KILPATRICK

# Saturday, April 12

## MATTHEW 28:18-20

*“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”* (MATTHEW 28:18-20 ESV)

The singing group “Cain” wrote a beautiful song called “The Commission”.

I love the chorus:

“Go tell the world about me  
I was dead but now I live  
I’ve gotta go now for a little while  
But goodbye is not the end”

Our assignment is quite simple.

We must share the story of Jesus with others: His life, His love for us and His sacrifice on the cross for our sins.

Jesus does not say goodbye to us because we will see Him again one day and live with Him for eternity. What a glorious day that will be!

## PRAYER

DEAR LORD,

I cannot live my life without you. You are a lamp for my feet and a light for my path. You are my strength and my redeemer. You are always with me. Please help me share your story and tell others all that you have done in my life. Until we meet in glory, I will praise your Holy Name.  
Amen.

CHRISTINE OLDING

# Sixth Sunday of Lent

PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 13

*Weekly Bible Reading Plan*

**SUNDAY, APRIL 13**

Mark 12:1-12

**MONDAY, APRIL 14**

Isaiah 5:1-7

*A prophecy describing Israel as God's vineyard, showing how this parable is rooted in Old Testament imagery.*

**TUESDAY, APRIL 15**

Psalms 118:22-23

*"The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," a key verse Jesus quotes in Mark 12:10-11.*

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16**

Matthew 21:33-46

*A parallel account of the Parable of the Tenants, offering additional details about Jesus' confrontation with the religious leaders.*

**THURSDAY, APRIL 17**

Acts 4:11-12

*Peter applies Psalm 118:22 to Jesus, proclaiming Him as the rejected cornerstone and the only source of salvation.*

**FRIDAY, APRIL 18**

Romans 9:30-33

*Paul discusses Israel's failure to attain righteousness because they rejected Christ, the true foundation.*

**SATURDAY, APRIL 19**

1 Peter 2:4-8

*Peter describes Jesus as the living stone rejected by men but chosen by God, emphasizing the contrast between belief and unbelief.*

# Palm Sunday, April 13

## MATTHEW 21:6-11

*“The disciples went and did as Jesus instructed them. They brought the donkey and colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David!’ ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’ ‘Hosanna in the highest heaven!’ (MATTHEW 21:6-11 NIV)*

Excitement was in the air! The crowds shouted “Hosanna” at Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem. They were thrilled to see Jesus and to welcome Him.

Palm Sunday often brings to our mind children entering church, shouting and waving palm branches. Do they understand why? Do we understand why? Or do we get lost in how cute the children look? Do we forget that Jesus is Christ...the son of David...the one prophesied hundreds of years before His entry into Jerusalem? Do we forget He is our King...our Savior...the sacrifice given for our sins?

Like the crowd, we can get caught up in the excitement of what we want or what we think has been won. Think of your favorite sports team and a major victory they won. We shout with excitement and joy over their victory. But do we shout with the same enthusiasm a season later? Do we follow as closely when our team loses? Excitement can be fleeting.

Christ is so much more than excitement. He’s far more important than a sports team could ever be. He was Lord when He entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, and He is still Lord today. Wave your palm branches, lift your voice, and shout, “Hosanna!” Don’t drop your palm branch after today has come and gone or when life sends hardships your way. Christ IS Lord—now and forever. Hosanna!!

## PRAYER

Dear Lord, You are the King of kings and the Lord of lords. You are everything! Help us love you more dearly... follow you more nearly. Amen.

LOU GRICE

# Monday, April 14

## LUKE 7:11-16

*“Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out – the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, ‘Don’t cry.’ Then he went up and touched the bier they were carrying him on, and the bearers stood still. He said, ‘Young man, I say to you, get up!’ The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother. They were all filled with awe and praised God. ‘A great prophet has appeared among us,’ they said. ‘God has come to help his people.’” (LUKE 7:11-16 NIV)*

This passage is a powerful statement of the omniscient nature of Jesus as he cares for his people with unfailing grace. As Jesus and His disciples pass the funeral procession, Jesus immediately reacts to the widow. He knows her, her circumstances, and her future. Without thought or discussion, Jesus tells her not to cry. Without hesitation, he saves her son and changes her life. We read that Jesus’ heart went out to her – His compassion caused Him to respond to her needs. The widow is given this gift because of the grace of our Lord, acting through Jesus Christ. In this first of three events where Jesus raises a person from the dead, the people are given a sign of who Jesus is, and we are given a glimpse of the story that is to come and the future that is also ours through faith.

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ, that he came to live among us, to teach us, to love us, and to die for us. I am so humbled by your grace and pray that I work each day to live a life that is worthy of you. Amen.

PHOEBE INGRAHAM

# Tuesday, April 15

## JOHN 11:21-27

*“Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, ‘if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’ Martha answered, ‘I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?’ ‘Yes, Lord,’ she replied, ‘I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.’” (JOHN 11:21-27 NIV)*

Martha’s view\_

The relationship between Jesus and this family went back to their childhood. The sisters had contrasting natures, yet it was Martha tasked with the management of the family. Martha expresses her faith and comprehension that Jesus is the Son of Man and the Son of God. She may well have understood the mission of Jesus better than the disciples.

What this means to me\_

Was Jesus trying to prepare the disciples for what was coming? We know this event marked the final days before the crucifixion. Prior to this, Jesus had brought a child back from death, but it was very clear no one was to speak of this. However, Jesus knew what was coming. Time was running out. Things were going from simple to complex very quickly. He had tried to warn the disciples, but they just didn’t comprehend the message. One can’t ignore the proximity between this resurrection and the crucifixion of our Lord. The Son of Man came to pay a ransom for many. It appears that Martha and Jesus took this opportunity to prove death can be temporary. How many times did Jesus say they were only sleeping?

## PRAYER

Father, How we thank you for the gift of Jesus! Martha shows us clearly how faith and confidence in Christ can defeat death and give us life everlasting. Give us eyes to see and ears to hear your glorious message. We ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

CINDY LAVIGNE

# Wednesday, April 16

## MARK 14:53, 55-56, 61-63

*“They led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes gathered together. Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, and they were not finding any. For many were giving false testimony against Him, but their testimony was not consistent. But He kept silent and did not answer. Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, ‘Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?’ And Jesus said, ‘I am; and you shall see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.’ Tearing his clothes, the high priest said, ‘What further need do we have of witnesses?’” (MARK 14:53, 55-56, 61-63 NAS)*

Think about it! As believers, if we were presented to the court system, we might have been terrified or even scared. Jesus wasn't! He knew the Father's heart. God had set up the Sanhedrin a long time ago by Moses (Numbers 11:16 and Deuteronomy 18:19). You see, just like our 9-member Chief Justice and associate justices in the Supreme Court of the U.S., our beloved Jewish communities have 23 Chief priests and elders in small Jewish communities, and 70 in the larger Jewish communities. For example, they would elect the high priest to serve at the temple; they had the authority to extend boundaries (especially on the Temple Mount and Jerusalem, and they had the final say with any question of the law. Therefore, Jesus had to go before them to declare his Godhead to people who would not believe him. Can you picture Jesus in front of 70 men? Jesus keeps quiet until he is asked directly, “Are you the Christ?” Our Lord finally responds, “I am.”

So, how does this apply to us? When challenged about our faith, do we keep quiet? How do we respond when people (or the media) say false things about our Christian beliefs? Do we follow our Lord's example and declare who we are--disciples of Christ? Or are we like Peter, who was in the Sanhedrin courtyard (verses 66-72) and denied knowing Jesus?

2 Corinthians 6:14 tells us that light does not have fellowship with darkness. This is why we must know God's will for our lives; we must know the WORD and have a relationship with Jesus Christ. I think about a time in undergrad school. I met a young man on campus. He was not a believer, and I had been a believer for about a year. I shared the Gospel with him, and he was saved and baptized that very same week. He began to attend the church I was going to and we were both growing in Christ. You see, this is a great story, but they all don't turn out this way. I have friends who ended up marrying their unbelieving boyfriends, and what came with them was lots of pain and sorrow. This is why we must know God's will for our lives; we must know the WORD and have a relationship with Jesus Christ. Follow HIS lead. He will direct you, walk with you, and love you.

## PRAYER

Lord, in the face of an unbelieving world, may we be bold in declaring our faith that you are the Christ. Amen.

ROSEANN WALKER

# Maundy Thursday, April 17

MATTHEW 27:11-14, 19, 24

*“Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, ‘Are you the King of the Jews?’ Jesus said, ‘You have said so.’ But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate said to him, ‘Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?’ But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed. Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, ‘Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.’ So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, ‘I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.’” (MATTHEW 27:11-14, 19, 24 ESV)*

Betrayal, denial, declarations of blasphemy, and accusations of political enmity are just some of the things Jesus had endured by the time he was brought to the Roman governor. Yet, when asked to defend himself, he either agreed or said nothing. Pilate found this amazing, as do I. The desire to defend myself, deflect my wrongdoing, and blame others runs deep. But Jesus had no such need. He was living out 1 Samuel 17:47 that the battle is the Lord’s.

While Pilate could see Jesus’ innocence, he did not have the strength to stand up for the man. All he could do was walk away, leaving the innocent Christ to the mob. In the end, as the earth shook, the temple curtain was torn and rocks split open; I wonder if Pontius Pilate came to fully understand just who this Jesus was?

This Jesus, who...suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. The third day he rose from the dead. He ascended into Heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty...and one day we will join Him there.

## PRAYER

Almighty God, thank you that the battle is yours and with Christ we win and spend eternity with you. Help us to daily rest in this truth. In Jesus’ holy name, Amen.

CATHY RIGGIN



# Good Friday, April 18

## LUKE 23:39-43

*“One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, ‘Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!’ But the other rebuked him, saying, ‘Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.’ And he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’ And he said to him, ‘Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.’” (LUKE 23:39-43 ESV)*

Christ meets us wherever we are at. For the two criminals, it was on their deathbeds nailed to a cross next to Jesus. Two men guilty of the same crime. Final judgment, entirely different results.

We will all meet Christ at the cross and face judgment. Yet for me, here and now, meeting Christ at the cross brings hope. Hope that my unbelieving children will repent and believe, and they then shall receive God’s grace and mercy. Hope that those who have never heard the Good News will recognize Jesus in their heart of hearts and thus be saved by His mercy.

At times, I struggle with my faith. Knowing that I am unworthy, will Christ grant me eternal life when we meet at the cross? God’s power, mercy, and grace are represented here. They provide hope when I am lost and are a beacon when I fall into dark times. Let us pray...

## PRAYER

Lord, such a fine line between eternal life and eternal death. Walk with us to keep us on the right path, for without you we are doomed. May your mercy and grace be everlasting. Amen.

TOM WAY

# Saturday, April 19

## JOHN 20:11-18

*“Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, ‘Woman, why are you crying?’ ‘They have taken my Lord away,’ she said, ‘and I don’t know where they have put him.’ At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. He asked her, ‘Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?’ Thinking he was the gardener, she said, ‘Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Mary.’ She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, ‘Rabboni!’ (which means ‘Teacher’).”*  
(JOHN 20:11-18 NIV)

Have you ever felt such despair, sadness, and confusion that you weren’t able to look at a situation with clear and open eyes and an open heart? Maybe a death, sudden or serious illness, a loss of a job or opportunity. The sadness and fear that Mary Magdalene experienced when Jesus was no longer in the tomb was exactly that. Mary Magdalene wasn’t able to see that it was actually Jesus asking why she was crying. She wasn’t able to see it was him and not a gardener asking. She was overcome with a myriad of emotions. Jesus’ resurrection is the key to Christianity. Death is not the end as we learn and as we see. Jesus rose, and we, too, and we will have eternal life.

The power of faith and hope of new life in Christ is resurrecting.

## PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank you for reminding us, as you did with Mary Magdalene, that we should endeavor to spread the word of your death and resurrection from the grave for the forgiveness of our sins. Thank you for your grace. You came into this world to teach us of the truth about God and God’s purposes in the realities that we face in the fallen world of which we live. In your name, we pray. And let your will be done. Amen.

ANN LYTHJOHAN

# Easter Sunday, April 20

## EPHESIANS 1:3-14

Over this Lenten time, you have pondered the experiences recorded in the gospels of people who encountered Jesus. This last page of the 2025 LPC Lenten Devotional is for YOU! In the space below, write about how YOU met Jesus in your life—an initial encounter or a lifetime of moments. Perhaps a moment of healing...perhaps a time of clarity in understanding who Jesus is...perhaps a moment of commitment to serving Him...perhaps a particular scripture that speaks directly to you and has a profound influence on how you know Jesus. THEN, write a short prayer thanking your Lord for revealing Himself and His grace and peace to you.

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## PRAYER:

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