

A photograph of a crowd of people with their hands raised in a church setting, overlaid with a text box. The text box contains the title "LENT 2020" in large, bold, black capital letters, and "COVERED IN DUST" in smaller, black capital letters below it. The background is a warm, golden-brown color, suggesting a church interior with soft lighting.

LENT 2020
COVERED IN DUST

A Devotional Journey for Lent

TRINITY LUTHERAN

Pastor Billy Newell

Covered In Dust

A Devotional Journey & Daily Reading Guide for Lent 2020

What goes through your mind when you see someone covered in dust? Perhaps you consider their job. Perhaps you consider the game they are playing. Perhaps you consider their housing situation or lack thereof. Context matters. In scripture, there are two reasons that would cross their mind. First, what is causing this person to enter into a state of mourning? Second, who is this person following so closely that they are covered in the dust at their leaders' feet?

Join us on this journey in Lent. First, we intentionally enter into a season of mourning. We consider the cost of our sin and then we repent. Second, we follow Jesus on His journey to the cross. In the end, I pray you are "Covered in Dust" following your Savior, Jesus!

Pastor Bill

Before you get started . . .



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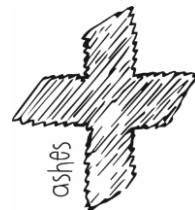
bible.com

1. Start each devotion with the scripture readings. Grab your Bible or use the provided QR codes that will take you to that day's reading in the YouVersion Bible App. QR codes are used to educate, inform, explain, and in this case, for presenting you with the scripture reading for each daily devotion.
Many phones can read a QR code using the camera function. On some older devices, you will need to download a free QR code reader from the app store. Hold your device over the QR Code so that it's clearly visible within your smartphone's screen. When you hover over the QR code a notification will pop up with a link to the reading.
2. Make sure you set aside time to do your daily reading. I suggest putting it on your calendar. If you don't, other things will fill your schedule and make it hard to do your reading.

Day 1 : Ash Wednesday – Covered In Dust

February 26, 2020

Bible Reading : Joel 2:12-14



Devotional Thought

It happens to just about all of us. We are just a child standing before one of our parents. They ask a question to which they already know the answer. “Did you do this?” In our youth, we could never have known that this was an opportunity for us to confess that we were guilty, receive forgiveness, and then move on in love. So, what do we do? We lie! “No, I didn’t do that.” We forfeit the opportunity for forgiveness and try to hide our guilt. Of course, we learn pretty quickly that our mom or dad knew all along and we learn a valuable lesson about telling the truth and owning our mistakes.

Ash Wednesday is a time when God gives us the opportunity to confess, receive forgiveness, and move on in love. Our Heavenly Father presents the question, “Did you do this?” As we consider our sin, we have the opportunity to acknowledge it and receive forgiveness. Perhaps today is the day to put aside the lie and own up to our sin.

Reflection Questions

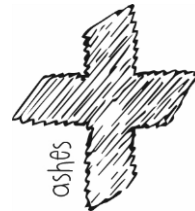
1. What makes it difficult to give voice to specific mistakes or sins?
2. How does it touch your heart that Jesus lives to pay the price for your sin?
3. What does it look like to live in forgiveness?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, please forgive me for my sin. Help me to live a new life shaped by your love and forgiveness. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 2 : Thursday, February 27, 2020

Bible Reading : Psalm 51:1-13



Devotional Thought

It was a hard summer of work! I woke up at 3:30 in the morning, prepped clothes and lunch for the day, and then drove to the bus that would take us to the fields. Detasseling the first field required long sleeves and a water resistant jacket to keep the cold moisture off of your clothes and skin. The second field required long sleeves but no jacket. The moisture was gone, except your sweat, but the cold was still hanging around. The rest of the fields for the day were hot, humid, and dusty. As you made your way down each row, the layer of dust and sweat got thicker and thicker. At the end of the day, you started a warm shower and watched the dirt slowly wash away and spin down the drain. It was refreshing every time!

In this Psalm, King David is expressing the feeling of being spiritually filthy. The stink of sin is there. The weight of guilt is there. The desire to be washed, purified, and restored is overwhelming. Lent is a time for us to acknowledge our need to be washed, purified, and restored. In God's mercy, He sent His Son Jesus, so we can experience that refreshing moment of forgiveness. Join King David in this prayer, "Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me."

Reflection Questions

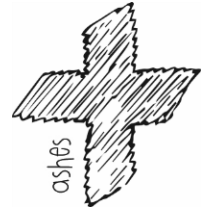
1. What sin in your life do you need to acknowledge before God?
2. Who do you need to ask for forgiveness?
3. What does it look like to live in forgiveness?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, create in me a clean heart and renew a loyal spirit within me. Restore my soul, so I can live a life free of guilt and shame. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 3 : Friday, February 28, 2020

Bible Reading : 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2



Devotional Thought

One of my favorite children's book series is the Berenstain Bears!!! In one story, Sister was very excited to have a new friend for a neighbor. As they went to the park for the first time they enjoyed playing together, especially on the seesaw! Perhaps you can remember that amazing, and mildly dangerous, piece of playground equipment. You get to enjoy the thrill of rising high in the air and then the butterflies in your stomach as you come flying back down! It is so much fun! Sister learned a valuable lesson about the seesaw. It's not as special by yourself. You have to invite a friend to experience and share the fun.

As a follower of Jesus, we get to experience forgiveness, love, and eternal grace! We get to receive countless blessings from God. As an ambassador for Christ, we get to share these gifts with our friends, family, coworkers, and neighbors!!! We get to invite others to experience the joy of following Jesus! So, that begs the question, who is God sending you to invite to experience the joy of following Jesus?

Reflection Questions

1. How has God blessed you through Jesus?
2. Make a list of 5 people that you want to experience the forgiveness and love of Jesus.
3. What does it look like to invite others to live in forgiveness?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for sharing Your love and forgiveness with me. Help me to share Your forgiveness and love with others. In Jesus' name, Amen!

Day 4 : Saturday, February 29, 2020

Bible Reading : Matthew 6:16-21



Devotional Thought

I could break my ribs and tolerate the pain like a champion. On the other hand, the seasonal cold takes me out. I'm terrible at being sick. Just leave me alone so I can lay on the couch and moan all day long. I know its terrible right?

Let's see if you can finish this phrase. "Misery loves _____!" During Lent, many people enter into a season of intentional sacrifice and/or suffering. Fasting or going without something for an extended period of time can definitely result in some suffering. The important question to ask is, "Why?" If you are fasting to get attention, then you've already gotten your reward...attention from people. Jesus teaches us to use fasting to strengthen our relationship with God and store up spiritual treasures that will last much longer than a brief moment of attention...forever! So, if you want to meaningfully fast, give up something so you can intentionally be in prayer or in scripture spending time with God! The impact will last forever!

Reflection Questions

1. What can you "fast" from that will provide an opportunity to spend more time with Jesus?
2. What keeps you from spending time with Jesus now?
3. What does it look like to schedule time to receive the forgiveness and love of Jesus?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, show me the things that I can give up in order to spend more time with you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 5 : Sunday, March 1, 2020 – Responding To Temptation

Bible Reading : Matthew 4:1-11



Devotional Thought

Yesterday we reflected on fasting and then today we see Jesus fasting and wrestling with Satan. As we pay close attention to our Teacher, Jesus, it is powerful to see how He behaves in the face of suffering and temptation. Each time Satan tempted Jesus, Jesus responded with the Word of God. Did you notice that? All three times, Jesus said, “For the Scriptures say...” Jesus shows us with His own life how important it is to be equipped with God’s Word and how powerful it is when faced with temptation.

Perhaps it is time to accept the invitation of God and spend time every day in His Word. Perhaps, in the face of suffering and temptation, God’s Word is your greatest resource to carry on. Each time you chew on God’s Word, He will shape you, guide you, and equip you.

Reflection Questions

1. Does your current pattern of life include time in God’s Word every day?
2. Can you begin to schedule a regular time in scripture for 15-30 minutes a day?
3. What would it look like to learn about a life of forgiveness every day?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for giving me Your Word and speaking to me through it. Help me to hunger for Your Word and to take it in every day. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 6 : Monday, March 2, 2020

Bible Reading : Genesis 3:1-13



Devotional Thought

Imagine you hear a big crash from the other room. You run in to see if your three children are alive and you immediately see three arms all pointing at someone else. The message is clear,

“It wasn’t me!”

Sin has broken so much of our world. We live in shame, no longer comfortable with being vulnerable. We live in fear, no longer willing to take ownership of our missteps. We would rather see someone else take the fall, even when we know we are to blame as well.

The story goes on. In just a few short verses, God promises to send help. Jesus would one day come to make things right again. No more shame. No more fear. No more blame games. It’s during Lent that we see Jesus relentlessly journey to the cross where He will pay the price for our sin. He makes it possible for us to be vulnerable again. Today, we can own our sin and receive forgiveness because of Jesus.

Reflection Questions

1. What causes you to hide from God?
2. How does it make you feel that Jesus loves you, even though you are imperfect?
3. What would it look like to live without fear and shame, receiving forgiveness fully?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, help me to show You all of me and fully receive Your forgiveness. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 7 : Tuesday, March 3, 2020

Bible Reading : Romans 5:12-19



Devotional Thought

People are on high alert these days as headlines of the Coronavirus flash across our screens. Everyone is praying that they don't come into contact with someone who is infected with this condition. For those who are infected, they are praying for a remedy or a cure. They are also praying that they don't pass the condition onto others.

Our Romans passage presents the consequences of the condition of sin. For those who are infected with this condition, the consequence is death. No matter what age, it comes. Through Adam, we have all been infected with this deadly condition. The story doesn't stop there! God, in His mercy, sent His Son to be our Remedy. He is our cure. Through His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus has overcome sin and death. For all who acknowledge their sin and trust Jesus to be their Remedy, there is the promise of salvation and eternal life.

Reflection Questions

1. If you knew there was a cure for your illness, would you turn it down?
2. What keeps us from acknowledging our sinful condition?
3. What does it look like to gratefully live with this salvation cure?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for providing a cure for my condition of sin. Please help me to trust Jesus with my salvation and my life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 8 : Wednesday, March 4, 2020 – The Perfect Sacrifice

Bible Reading : John 1:29-34



Devotional Thought

Imagine you're in a house fire and you can't really see what is going on with all of the smoke. You're low to the ground trying to find your way to a safe place to get out. Then you hear it, "Hello, it's the Bloomington Fire Department. Call out!" Those words bring immediate hope for what is to come. You are being saved!

John the Baptist makes a powerful announcement! "Hello, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world is here. Call out!" The people of God had waited for a long time, not always seeing things very clearly. But now, there is hope! Jesus is here. You are being saved!

Reflection Questions

1. What does it mean to you that God sent Jesus to save you?
2. How do you tell the story of your salvation?
3. What does it look like to live in God's grace each day?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for calling out to me and letting me know my Savior is here! Help me to trust Him for my salvation and to guide others to His saving grace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 9 : Thursday, March 5, 2020

Bible Reading : Isaiah 53:6-8



Devotional Thought

John the Baptist brought forward an Old Testament image when he referred to Jesus as the “Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world”. The Old Testament sacrificial lamb was a payment for sin. The only problem was that people needed repeated sacrifices because they kept sinning.

Jesus is a different sacrifice. He is the perfect lamb, paying the price for the sins of the world once and for all. The debt you owed, He paid in full. The price of your sin was upon His shoulders. As you look through the Isaiah text, pay close attention to the things that Jesus endured for you.

Oppressed. Treated harshly. Led to death. Unjustly condemned. Disregarded. Struck down. Why would someone do this for others? There is only one possibility...Love! He loves you that much! So, now you are debt free.

Reflection Questions

1. What does it feel like to have a huge debt?
2. What comes to mind when you think of Jesus paying the price for your sin?
3. What does it look like to live life freed from the price of sin?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for your deep love for me and for paying the price of my sin. Help me to live free from guilt and shame. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 10 : Friday, March 6, 2020

Bible Reading : 1 Peter 1:17-20



Devotional Thought

It was a big moment! I was heading to the dealership to trade in my '89 Jeep Cherokee and purchase a vehicle for the first time! I knew I would be paying for it, so I planned out my budget and knew what kind of vehicle I could afford. I was so thrilled to be buying a black, single cab, Ford F-150!!! But, that's not the best part. My dad came with me to give me advice and help me navigate the process. At the end, when I was getting ready to sign the dotted line, my dad reached over and committed to paying for the truck! I was shocked! This was not what I expected and I spent many years living in gratitude that my dad stepped in and paid the price for my truck.

Perhaps you can imagine getting surprised with a new car. Even better, imagine living life knowing that you have been purchased back from the grip of death. As we consider the price that we should pay for our sin, Jesus steps in and commits to paying for our sin with His very own life. Now, we have the opportunity to live in gratitude that God paid such a huge price for us!

Reflection Questions

1. Have you ever had someone surprise you by paying for something? How did that feel?
2. How does it look to thank someone for doing something so special for you?
3. What does it look like to live in gratitude to God?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for stepping in and paying the price for our sin. Help us to be grateful each day for Your love and grace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 11 : Saturday, March 7, 2020 – A Psalm for Saturday

Bible Reading : Psalm 32:1-7



Devotional Thought

I love watching fitness competitions of all kinds. These days, there are many competitions that include carrying weight long distances in a combined test of strength and endurance. As the athletes go farther and farther, they begin to slow down, their muscles begin to shake uncontrollably, and their face begins to reveal the pain that they are enduring. Then, it happens! They cross the finish line, drop the weight, and their whole being is consumed with joy, happiness, and relief!

I see that in today's Psalm. The Psalmist expresses the extent of the burden of sin in verse 4. Then, one word emphasizes the significant transition... "Finally!!!" This moment of confessing all of your sin comes with significant joy, happiness, and relief. As the burden of sin is lifted, a new life emerges from the ashes and verses 1 and 2 become a reality. "What joy!?!?!?"

Reflection Questions

1. What sin in your life continues to weigh you down?
2. Take a few minutes to live in "complete honesty" before God and write out a confession of sins. Be specific.
3. What does it look like to live a new life where forgiveness allows for your "sin to be put out of sight"?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, help me to live in complete honesty with You, trusting your promises of forgiveness and love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 12 : Sunday, March 8, 2020 – Life in Faith

Bible Reading : John 3:1-17



Devotional Thought

There's an old saying that goes around, "Nothing good happens after dark." If you want to do something that you're not supposed to be doing, you do it in the secret of the night. Nicodemus is sneaking around at night, heading over to see Jesus. We get to be a fly on the wall for a late night chat between Jesus and Nicodemus.

As Nicodemus struggles to understand what Jesus is talking about, we see Jesus emphasize the significance of the spirit's activity and the significance of what you believe. As the conversation goes on, Jesus begins to speak more plainly. First, the mysterious activity of the Spirit. Then, He uses an Old Testament narrative to point to His death. Then, He shares a pretty straight forward statement. "God so loved the world..." God sent Jesus on a mission to purchase us back from condemnation and sin.

Finally, Jesus invites us to consider what we believe. Believe in the salvation work of Jesus and you will have eternal life. While God's irrational, radical love for you can seem unbelievable; it's that very belief in Jesus as your savior that opens the door to eternal life. What do you believe?

Reflection Questions

1. Do you find yourself keeping your relationship with Jesus a secret?
2. What keeps you from fully believing God loves you enormously?
3. What do you think about the notion that God's motivation is love?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for loving me so fully and for sending Jesus to save me. Help me to live in Your love each day and share it with the people around me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 13 : Monday, March 9, 2020

Bible Reading : Genesis 12:1-4



Devotional Thought

Can you imagine hearing those words at 75 years old? “Leave your native country, your relatives, and our father’s family...” This is a big ask! Think about living your whole life in your hometown and then God asks you to move. Pick up everything and start over. I imagine this was an unexpected announcement.

Now, the challenge to move didn’t come without a promise. “I will make you into a great nation.” So, you’ve been asked to move away, but you’ve been given a promise. It’s a fork in the road. What do you do? Well, Abram departed as the Lord had instructed. He believed in God’s promise. He lived his life trusting that God would do what He said He would do. In the end, Jesus was the greatest fulfillment of this promise. Through Jesus, all the families on earth are blessed. So, we have the same opportunity that Abram had. We simply believe that God does what He says He will do. We believe the promises of God fulfilled in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Reflection Questions

1. What makes it hard to believe people when they make a promise?
2. Where can you go to determine if God is fulfilling His promises?
3. What do you need to leave behind right now, so you can fully trust and follow Jesus?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, help me to have faith like Abram! Help me to live my life trusting that You fulfil Your promises. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 14 : Tuesday, March 10, 2020

Bible Reading : Romans 4:1-8



Devotional Thought

Have you ever seen someone who isn't comfortable receiving a gift from someone else? A friend offers to buy lunch. A neighbor shovels your driveway. A coworker sends a get well soon card. Many times over the response is, "You didn't have to do that!" Of course they didn't have to. That's what makes it a gift! But, sometimes we struggle to fully accept a gift.

It wasn't that long ago that I received an amazing gift. Someone anonymously gave me a new mountain bike! I couldn't believe it. As the initial wave of excitement settled, I wrestled with the fact that I couldn't even offer to pay for the bike. The bike was simply given to me, no strings attached!

This is the life of faith, following Jesus. Faith is a gift and so is the salvation won for us by Jesus Christ! We can't earn it. We can't buy it. All we can do is receive it in faith. Now, back to the bike. The best thing I can do to honor that gift is to ride that bike and enjoy it to the fullest capacity. In faith, we get to live each day fully appreciating the forgiveness and love that we receive and get to share because of Jesus.

Reflection Questions

1. Do you find yourself struggling to receive gifts from others?
2. Why do we think there is a "catch" when we see a "free" gift?
3. What would it look like to fully enjoy the forgiveness of Christ each day?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for the gifts of faith and the gift of forgiveness through Christ. Help me to fully receive it and share it each day. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 15 : Wednesday, March 11, 2020 – The Real Thing

Bible Reading : John 3:22-36



Devotional Thought

One of our greatest challenges as humans afflicted with sin is understanding that the world doesn't revolve around us. What!? The world doesn't revolve around me?! Ok, that sounds a little over the top. Usually, we're more subtle than that. In our sin, we tend to be focused on ourselves. In short, we tend to put ourselves in the place of God.

John models what it looks like to be humble before God. As Jesus influences more and more people, John celebrates. Then, John shares a very clear teaching about Jesus. John wants to make it very clear that Jesus is sent by God with all of the authority of Heaven. Then he brings us back to belief. Believe and trust in Jesus and receive eternal life. Jesus came down from Heaven on a rescue mission so He could pave the way for us to return there with Him.

Reflection Questions

1. How big is Jesus in your life? Measure this by the amount of time you spend with Him each day.
2. Have you ever struggled with the thought that God is far away?
3. As you read this text, how is God messing with you?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I pray You increase in my life, while I decrease. Help me to see more of You each day as You reveal Yourself fully through Your Son Jesus. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 16 : Thursday, March 12, 2020

Bible Reading : Hebrews 5:1-9



Devotional Thought

I have to confess a pet peeve of mine. You go to a restaurant and you ask for your favorite soft drink. The waiter says something like, “You got it.” Upon returning to the table with your drink, you take the first sip and you immediately know they have served you a knockoff of the real thing. Coca Cola knew you didn’t care for knockoffs, so they had a slogan for a long time, “Taste the real thing!”

This was essentially the problem for the sacrificial system with priests serving as mediators between God and His people. Before the priests could make sacrifices on behalf of the people, they had to make sacrifices for themselves. Jesus comes and gives us a taste of the real thing! As the perfect High Priest, Jesus offers Himself as the sacrifice once and for all. How beautiful is it that the perfect High Priest offers prayers and pleadings to God for you?!?!

Reflection Questions

1. Do you sometimes find yourself substituting other things in place of Jesus?
2. How does this text help you to see that Jesus is a fuller and greater mediator, opening up a direct channel between you and your Heavenly Father?
3. What does it look like to daily take advantage of your access to your Heavenly Father?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Your Son to be my perfect High Priest! Help me to appreciate my full access to you each day. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 17 : Friday, March 13, 2020

Bible Reading : 1 John 4:4-10



Devotional Thought

I love you! These three words are so powerful. More than that, a life motivated by love has the power to change lives and overcome the greatest of challenges. Many times over, we ask the question, “Why would God give up so much for sinners?” Real love is not motivated by getting something in return. The origin of God’s actions is love itself. So, in love, God sent His Son for us! In love, God chose us to be His Daughters and Sons!

Now, you have been given an example of what real love looks like. As you receive this wonderful love of God through Jesus Christ, you get to model it for your family, friends, coworkers, and neighbors. As you sacrifice for others, you show them what real love looks like. Eventually, someone is going to ask the questions, “Why would you give up so much for me?” Then, you get to share the source of love in Jesus Christ! In the meantime, carry on loving as God loves you.

Reflection Questions

1. How does the cultural definition of love defer from the love described in this text?
2. Who do you think God is calling you to love unconditionally today?
3. What does it look like for you to live in the love of Christ?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for loving me unconditionally and sending Your Son Jesus to show me that love. Help me to love others in the way that You love them. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 18 : Saturday, March 14, 2020 – A Psalm for Saturday

Bible Reading : Psalm 121



Devotional Thought

Something changes your hearing ability when you have children. Noises, once easily tuned out, stand out above all of the background noises and cause you to spring into action. As soon as you hear the baby crying, you drop everything to go check and see why they are crying out. It's interesting to see how your love for your children causes you to constantly be aware of their cry for help.

In many ways, this depicts the kind of fatherly love that God has for us. He cares for you as a daughter or a son and is always aware of your greatest needs. Even better than an earthly parent, He never loses focus or sleeps on the job. He is always watching over His people and listening for their cries for help.

Reflection Questions

1. What circumstance of life compels you to cry out to God?
2. How have you seen Him answer your prayers in the past?
3. How does it make you feel to consider God constantly watching over you?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for being attentive to my cries for help and responding according to Your will. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 19 : Sunday, March 15, 2020 – Right Place, Right Time

Bible Reading : John 4:5-26



Devotional Thought

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to run into Jesus? Just imagine being out and about running errands and what do you know, Jesus is right there next to you in the check-out line. What would be your first thought? “Did I put on deodorant?” “Is my hair ok?” “Have I sufficiently hidden my life of sin?” I know that last one was heavy.

But seriously, Jesus encounters the Samaritan woman and this interaction includes a powerful declaration in verse 26. “I am the Messiah!” Jesus demonstrated an awareness of her whole life and then dropped a bomb. He is the promised Messiah. It’s so important for us to watch closely and reflect on His posture. He didn’t approach her with guilt and shame and judgement. He demonstrated His knowledge of her sin and extended His grace. Perhaps we should take a page out of the Samaritan woman’s book in verse 25. The Messiah, the Christ, will explain everything. As we take that to heart, we follow closely behind Jesus and take in every word.

Reflection Questions

1. What sin do you find yourself pretending is hidden from God?
2. When you see Jesus’ interaction with the Samaritan woman, what does it tell you about the way He would interact with you?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus to encounter us on life’s journey. Help us to see Him clearly and learn from everything that He explains. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 20: Monday, March 16, 2020

Bible Reading : Exodus 17:1-7



Devotional Thought

One of the more stressful moments in sports can be seen when a player stands at the free throw line and is expected to hit both shots. Each player spends countless hours practicing that routine and that moment. Inevitably, players will take that first shot and miss. It happens to everyone. So, what does everyone say? “You need to have a short memory.” Forget what just happened and focus on the second shot.

In the context of today’s text, the people of God had a very short memory and that wasn’t a good thing! They were just delivered from slavery in Egypt in a miraculous way! Now, a short time later, they are already grumbling and questioning God’s motives. It’s amazing to see what God does. Knowing their sin and their grumbling, He chooses compassion. He miraculously provides water and responds to their needs.

Reflection Questions

1. Can you remember a time when you questioned God’s plan for your life?
2. What is an example of when you quickly forgot God’s blessings in your life and began to grumble about a specific circumstance?
3. How do you see God providing for your needs today?

Prayer

*Heavenly Father, thank You for being patient with us in our grumbling and for providing for our needs.
In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

Day 21: Tuesday, March 17, 2020

Bible Reading : Romans 5:1-8



Devotional Thought

As an endurance athlete, trials come on a regular basis. Early on, as a runner, I used to have a pretty bad mental perspective about the challenges faced in practices and races. Hills were my least favorite challenge! When I saw hill workouts on the schedule, I would moan and groan. Then, one day, something changed. I started telling myself, “Hills are an opportunity to be better!” So, every time I faced a hill running or cycling, I would yell, “Alright, we’re about to get better!!!”

It’s funny . . . those hills got easier.

We don’t always handle challenges in life with grace or excitement. We don’t always view those challenges as an opportunity to develop character. Verse 8 says it all. While we were still sinners, God sent Christ to die for us. Even as we moan and groan, God responds in love.

Reflection Questions

1. How hard is it for you to sacrifice for someone that is not so loveable?
2. How does it shape your perspective to see God love us, even when we’re unlovable?
3. What difficult circumstances do you need God to help you through today?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for loving us even though we are sinners. Help us to live each day as an opportunity to grow in Your love. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 22: Wednesday, March 18, 2020 – See & Say

Bible Reading : John 4:27-30, 39-42



Devotional Thought

It wasn't that long ago that families and friends gathered around their living rooms to see who would be crowned the super bowl champions. And let's face it, most people tune in to see what happens with the commercials! No matter how amazing the commercials become, the best form of advertisement remains the same...word of mouth. You know it happens among your friends all of the time. "Did you see that great deal?!" "Hey, you need to try out this new barbeque seasoning!" "I would recommend this crock pot to anyone!" We love to tell people when something changes our lives!

In the text today, the Samaritan woman shared her encounter with Jesus with everyone from her village. Of course, they wanted to see what all of the fuss was about. So, they took her word and went to see if it was real. Then, they had their own encounter with Jesus. They didn't need the woman to tell the story. They can tell their own story. Each of us has a story to tell, so others can have their own encounter with the "Savior of the world."

Reflection Questions

1. Who has shared their encounters with Jesus with you?
2. Who is God stirring in your heart to share your encounter with Jesus?
3. How would you celebrate when they believe for themselves?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus so I can have an encounter with Him. Help me to know how to share the story so others might have their own encounter with Him. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 23: Thursday, March 19, 2020

Bible Reading : 1 John 4:11-16



Devotional Thought

The Grand Canyon is a special place. There are so many pictures that depict the beautiful landscape and amazing views. You can use satellite imagery to zoom in and see the massive expanse from cliff to cliff. You can even watch videos of those who have gone on adventurous hikes, some barely living to tell the tale. But, if you haven't seen it for yourself, it's just not the same. That comes through as others tell their story with enthusiasm and you just smile and nod, knowing you can't match their enthusiasm.

Verse 14 says it all, "We have seen with our own eyes and now testify". We have the eyewitness account of those who have seen the Son of God with their own eyes. As they witnessed the love of God with their own eyes, they passed it on. Now, we have witnessed the love of God with our own eyes as we have scoured God's word and experienced His love through other sisters and brothers in Christ. God lives in us and sends us to "testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world". As we trust in His love, we also get to share it with those who need to see it for themselves.

Reflection Questions

1. Where have you clearly seen God's love?
2. How would you tell the story of God's love in your life?
3. What does it look like to trust in His love?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending your Son Jesus to love me. Help me to know how I can share the story of His love with others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 24: Friday, March 20, 2020

Bible Reading : Romans 10:5-13



Devotional Thought

Having access to certain events can come at a hefty price! Super Bowl tickets might cost \$4,000-\$5,000 on average. World Series tickets average \$1,000. You can only get a ticket to the Oscars after receiving a special invitation. It's quite the exclusive event! Perhaps you've received special invitations to private events. It certainly makes you feel good when you have access. On the other hand, it can feel terrible to be looking in from the outside.

Jesus has obtained access to eternal life for "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord". It doesn't matter your race, your title, your financial stature, or your capacity to influence. Access to eternal life doesn't depend on you earning a special place. In fact, your efforts to achieve righteousness before God fall far short and land you on the outside looking in. Faith in Jesus saves.

Reflection Questions

1. What aspect of our culture is challenged by this text?
2. Why do you think we are uncomfortable with the fact that we can't earn salvation?
3. What does it look like to see all people through God's eyes?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for creating all people and loving them so unconditionally. Help me to trust You and give voice to the faith that I have in Jesus Christ. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 25: Saturday, March 21, 2020 – A Psalm for Saturday

Bible Reading : Psalm 95:1-9



Devotional Thought

Can you imagine the strength it would take to hold a mountain in your hand? How about shaping the earth (the dry ground) like it's a piece of playdough? When you consider the creator of the universe and the kind of power and strength it would take to put the stars, sun, and moon into their places, it can drive you to your knees.

Instead of living in fear, we can live in awe and wonder! We can gaze upon creation and consider the strength and creativity of God. That very same God “watches over” us. As you consider the wonderful things God has done, give thanks and sing His praises.

Reflection Questions

1. For what can you be grateful for today?
2. What part of creation fills you with awe?
3. Search your favorite worship song on YouTube and use it to praise God!

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for keeping watch over me. Help me to daily give thanks for all that you have done. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 26: Sunday, March 22, 2020 – Eyes Wide Open

Bible Reading : John 9:1-7, 13-17, 34-39



Devotional Thought

It happened when I was in college. I can remember gravitating toward the front of my classes. That should have been my first clue that something was wrong. ;) It took a little while for me to notice what was going on. My vision was changing. It turns out, I'm near sighted. At this point, I can't see details just across the room. Now, with glasses the story changes. I recently learned that each person's eyes have a different responsiveness to correction. Some struggle to see 20/20 or worse, even with glasses. In my case, my eyes receive correction to 20/15. (In other news, that is apparently going to change as well.)

Certainly our text provokes the topic of sight. It also provokes a couple of spiritual conversations. First, we see this brief dialogue about the cause of this man's blindness. Is it sin? At that time, there was a belief that illnesses of all kinds were a punishment for sin. Jesus offers a different alternative. Why then? "So the power of God could be seen in him." Jesus demonstrates who He is as He exercises authority and power over a broken creation struggling with ailments. Then, he helps our spiritual vision. With little correction, we begin to see things more clearly with our spiritual eyes. Jesus is the Chosen One! Jesus gives sight to the blind! Jesus comes to share good news and heal! The Pharisees are having a bit of a blurry vision problem. Blinded by their pride, they struggle to see who is right before them. Jesus is the Messiah for whom they have been waiting to come and deliver God's people, once and for all.

Reflection Questions

1. What causes you to be spiritually blind at times?
2. How is Jesus helping you to see things more clearly?
3. What does it look like to see challenges and ailments as an opportunity to reveal God's power and bring Him glory? (This is a tough one.)

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for coming to bring healing to this fallen creation. Please, help me to see You at work, even during the more difficult circumstances of my life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 27: Monday, March 23, 2020

Bible Reading : Isaiah 42:14-21



Devotional Thought

I spend a lot of time, as a dad, trying to help my children see what is coming. Sometimes the advice is informed by a heart of mentorship. “If you do your homework right away, you won’t have to rush to get it done at the last minute.” I’ll admit, there are other times that the advice is driven by fear. “Don’t climb that tree, you might fall and break your leg, arm, neck, ribs, wrists, ankles...” You get the point. All in all, whether we are children or adults, we sometimes see things right in front of us and don’t seem to remember the advice once given to us.

Our text today is one of those times God gives us a heads up. You will see my servant right in front of you, but you won’t see who He is. You will hear my truth, but you won’t have ears to hear the actual truth. I would like to think we don’t have this problem today, but I’m afraid this is still a struggle for us. As we see this warning and then reflect on the way the leaders of religious law react to Jesus, we have a chance to avoid their mistake. We can see Jesus for who He is and learn from Him each day.

Reflection Questions

1. What do you think keeps us from seeing Jesus for who He is?
2. What aspect of Jesus’ expectations is a bit of a challenge for you?
3. How does it shape your perspective that God warned us hundreds of years ago how He would send His Servant, Jesus?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, give me ears to hear and eyes to see your truth. Help me to see Jesus for who He really is and follow Him well. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 28: Tuesday, March 24, 2020

Bible Reading : Ephesians 5:8-14



Devotional Thought

You've heard the phrase, "Let's shine some light on the situation." Frequently, this is an opportunity to reveal certain truths about a situation that may or may not be welcomed by those involved. So, what determines the difference in response? If those involved are behaving in an upright manner, they love the "light". For those who are not, they do not welcome the "light".

When Jesus healed the blind man in our text on Sunday, the Pharisees were not thrilled with the impact Jesus was having. They didn't have eyes to appreciate the miracle or the person performing it. Instead, they lived in fear of losing their authority and power. That was made evident in their offended response when the formerly blind man suggested Jesus was a prophet. As Jesus continues to reveal who He is as the Christ, the Light continues to reveal their evil ways. Paul is encouraging all Christians to live as people of the light. It will produce what is "good and right and true".

Reflection Questions

1. Have you been reluctant to allow Jesus to shine light on aspects of your life?
2. How have others reacted to the light of Christ shining from you?
3. What might it look like to live more like people of the light?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus to be the Light of the world. Help me to follow Jesus, living as a "person of the light". In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 29: Wednesday, March 25, 2020 – The Shepherd’s Love

Bible Reading : John 10:1-15



Devotional Thought

A good friend in college talked about the family dairy farm all of the time. He knew the operation, he knew the challenges, he knew the crop rotations, and he especially knew the dairy cows. Even while he was off to college, he was keeping track of the new calves and he was especially interested in making sure his sick cows were on the mend. It was like these animals were his children. He clearly cared about them. I was excited one summer to get to see this love in person, visiting his farm and getting the grand tour. I even got to milk some cows! (That was pretty exciting for a guy from the city!) One of the things that stood out to me was how the cows would respond to my friend when he spoke to them. There was a familiarity there. They seemed to sense his care for them.

Jesus uses this kind of image to demonstrate His love for His people. Like a shepherd who cares for his sheep. He’s not a hired hand, He’s the owner. He’s all in. He will do whatever it takes to make sure His sheep are thriving. Just in case we needed Him to speak clearly, He gives us verse 14. He describes a powerful relationship. He knows us. He studies us as He cares for us. Over time, just like those cows, we will begin to respond to His caring voice. We will sense His care for us. In the end, He gives His life for His sheep . . . for us.

Reflection Questions

1. What keeps people from allowing others to know them fully?
2. How does this passage shape your perspective about Jesus?
3. What would you have to do to your schedule to spend some time listening to Jesus’ voice every day?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus to be my good shepherd. Help me to hear His voice clearly and respond to His direction. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 30: Thursday, March 26, 2020

Bible Reading : Ezekiel 34:11-17



Devotional Thought

It can be a scary feeling to be lost. I can remember playing inside the clothing racks while my mom was shopping. The warning always comes, “Stay close by.” Then you forget. Upon emerging from the clothing rack, mom was nowhere in sight. At the time, I didn’t realize she was watching from a safe distance so I could learn a valuable lesson. I still remember the brief moment of fear, sensing that I was now alone.

Sheep sometimes get lost. Often times, a predator comes close enough to cause the sheep to scatter and run until they can’t run any more. Then, they look around and feel alone. God uses this image to express His heart to seek out and rescue His lost sheep. He expresses care and concern for us. He will find us and bring us back home with the rest of the flock. No matter how far away we feel, there is no distance too far for God to search and find us. There is no wayward act that causes Him to give up on you.

Reflection Questions

1. What causes you to feel far away from God?
2. How does it make you feel to see God’s desire to search and find you?
3. What might it look like to trust Jesus, the Good Shepherd, to bring you home?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for loving me so much you search for me when I am lost and you carry me home. Help me to trust you and follow the sound of your voice. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 31: Friday, March 27, 2020

Bible Reading : 1 Peter 5:6-11



Devotional Thought

It's amazing to see a lion on the prowl! Of course, I've only seen them on TV, but it's still captivating. With an enormous amount of patience, lions will work to isolate their prey. If they can get one animal to get spooked and run away from the herd, then it'll be dinner time. If the herd stays together, then the lion has a hard time overcoming its prey. There's too much help close at hand.

Peter uses this image to express urgency. He is writing to a group of Christians who have been experiencing persecution. It is starting to take a toll. It's as if the devil is slowly working to isolate his prey. In the face of such persecution and suffering, we look to Jesus who suffered for us. We look to Jesus for restoration, support, and strength. And just in case you feel like you're alone, you have a family of believers wrestling with life in a similar way. Together, we cling to faith and lean into the power of Jesus.

Reflection Questions

1. What circumstances in life make you feel like isolating from the rest of the world?
2. What might it look like to humble yourself before God?
3. What encouragement do you find in this text?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, protect me from the attacks of the devil. Help me to stay strong in faith and to lean into the power of Jesus. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 32: Saturday, March 28, 2020 – A Psalm for Saturday

Bible Reading : Psalm 142



Devotional Thought

Several years ago, I was blessed to help lead team building retreats for youth. During one of the exercises, we would set out a bunch of small mouse traps. One student would be blind folded, while another student led them through the mouse traps. They were only allowed to speak commands from across the room. You can imagine the kind of trust it takes to take your shoes off and let someone else lead you through mouse traps.

This Psalm shares a very raw experience. The writer is clearly feeling attacked and abandoned. Crying out for help to no avail, the writer still clings to God. In the absence of human support, we still have a powerful heavenly Father who listens to our pleas for help. As we take refuge in God, verse 7 shows us that we can expect God to send His people as a community of support. We can trust Him to guide us through the traps that we face in this life.

Reflection Questions

1. Can you think of a time when you felt abandoned?
2. In what way does this Psalm provide encouragement?
3. Who might God be sending you to offer support in their time of need?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I cry out to You in my time of need. Show me how You send Your people to multiply celebrations and divide burdens. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 33: Sunday, March 29, 2020 – Words of Life

Bible Reading : John 11:1-3, 30-45



Devotional Thought

Going to the gym can be an intimidating experience sometimes. Sometimes, you see guys that are huge, lifting massive weights, and letting out huge cries to push themselves to their limits. I have to admit. Seeing that kind of strength makes me think these guys are machines with no soft side. Over the years, my perspective has changed. Some of the biggest guys have turned out to be some of the most compassionate. In fact, many friends refer to them as “a big teddy bear”. I’m not sure they picked that nickname, but it fit.

In our text today, we see a powerful reality. Jesus weeps from compassion. You might think He is all heart. The people that saw Him weep gave voice to this thought. What happened to His power to heal? Couldn’t he have done something? Then Jesus raises the bar, no pun intended. He stands in front of that tomb and raises Lazarus from the dead. Jesus has real emotions. He is fully man. Jesus has divine power. He is fully God. Both true and put to use for you. His love drives Him to overcome for you.

Reflection Questions

1. How does this passage shape your perspective about Jesus?
2. Would you have been frustrated with Jesus for showing up “late”?
3. Which resonates with you, Jesus’ power or Jesus’ compassion?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus to overcome death and for allowing us to learn of His great work during His life on earth. Help us to trust you as you share your compassion and use your power at just the right time. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 34: Monday, March 30, 2020

Bible Reading : Romans 8:1-2, 5-11



Devotional Thought

Raffles are one of those things I've learned to do for the sake of the cause, but not with the expectation to win. Time and time again, I sit and watch other people win a raffle drawing. They get all excited and everyone cheers! As I sit there, I think to myself, "Wouldn't it be nice to have that experience?"

Yesterday we saw Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead. And if you're like me, you're thinking, "Wouldn't it be nice to have that experience?" "Wouldn't it be nice if death wasn't the final word?" Today's passage begins to bridge the gap for us. The Spirit of God, who raised Christ from the dead, lives in us. Right now! This Spirit is present in us, giving us power to overcome sin and live a new life in Christ. And, just as Christ was raised from the dead, we too will be bodily raised from the dead to eternal life.

Reflection Questions

1. What struggle with sin makes you feel powerless?
2. How does it change your perspective to know the powerful Spirit of God is in you?
3. What does it look like to live with the power of the Spirit?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for giving me Your Spirit, enabling me to live a new life. Help me to see my sin and to overcome it by the power of Your Spirit. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 35: Tuesday, March 31, 2020

Bible Reading : Ezekiel 37:1-14



Devotional Thought

“You want me to do what?” I can remember it like it was yesterday. In high school, our student ministry was going to lead one of our Sunday worship services. Yep! Every part of the service was student led. You can imagine my surprise when the invitation came. “Billy, what would you think about sharing a message?” I had spoken at many student ministry events, but speaking in front of the whole congregation was another story. I worked with my pastor and received a lot of encouragement. In the end, that day marked a significant moment. It was my turn to speak words of life!

In our text, the “Son of man” was a prophet. God was sending him out to speak and the prophet, like many before, was apprehensive at times. You can imagine the questions. “What will I say?” “How will people react?” “What if I do something wrong and disappoint the one who sent me?” The message is clear in this text. God will give us words of life to speak and His Spirit will empower us along the way. We have the privilege to share the good news with those who desperately need the new life that comes in Jesus Christ.

Reflection Questions

1. What keeps you from sharing Jesus with others?
2. How does this passage shape your perspective?
3. Who is God placing on your heart right now to share your faith journey with?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for giving me the opportunity to share Your words of life with others. Help me to see the opportunities that you put in front of me each day and to speak the words you give to me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 36: Wednesday, April 1, 2020 – Chosen & Loved

Bible Reading : John 12:1-11



Devotional Thought

A dinner to celebrate Jesus. Lazarus is there! Can you imagine how he felt? Martha was there offering her gift of service to the group. Mary was there offering an expensive gift to anoint Jesus for His burial. It's an amazing context! So many people expressing their gratitude for what Jesus has done already! Then, there was Judas Iscariot. Already struggling with seeing the world through eyes of sin and blind to seeing the world through the eyes of Christ. Even still, they are all there as one big family.

Following Jesus still looks like this today. Those who are all in along with those who are skeptical gathered around the table living life together. Some will pour out sacrifices of all kinds because of what Jesus is doing in their life. Some will yell at them for being silly and wasteful. Some will even be in danger because others see them as a threat. Through it all, Jesus is at work accomplishing His mission and inviting us to be on the journey with Him.

Reflection Questions

1. Which person in this passage do you relate to the most?
2. What do you take from Jesus' response to Judas?
3. What does it look like to live life grateful for what Jesus has done for you?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for drawing me into Your family and meeting me where I am on the journey. Help me to live life responding to your amazing grace in my life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 37: Thursday, April 2, 2020

Bible Reading : Ephesians 1:3-8



Devotional Thought

Can you remember those days on the playground? Team captains have been picked. Everyone is standing there with the same prayer in their heart. “Please don’t let me be last!” Basketball was the worst for me at the towering height of 5’8”. It doesn’t feel good to be the last resort.

Verse 4 is mind boggling! “Before He made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ.” No lining up. No assessment of skill. No judgement of physical stature or knowledge. You are chosen by God. You are adopted into the family. As we look at Jesus together, we see the love of God pouring out for all of creation. Now, we get to live as those who have already been chosen and given a new identity in Christ.

Reflection Questions

1. What does it feel like to be a last resort?
2. How does this passage shape the way you understand God’s love for you?
3. How does this passage shape the way you see other people?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for loving me and choosing me before You even created the world. Help me to grow in my understanding of what it means to be a part of Your family every day. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 38: Friday, April 3, 2020

Bible Reading : Romans 12:1-5



Devotional Thought

My great uncle Donnie is one of those people that you just enjoy being around. We always enjoyed listening to his stories and experiencing the passion he seemed to have for life. He was also quite confident. Family members would mess with him and say, “Donnie, you’re so conceited!” Never slow to respond, he would say, “I am not. Conceitedness is a fault and I’m perfect!” All kidding aside, one of the most impressive things to see about Donnie was his hunger for God’s word. He would lean into this text just as you and I do today.

“Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves.” God invites us to see the truth about who we are and how He has created us. We have strengths and we have weaknesses. With an honest evaluation, we can see where we fit in the greater body of Christ. The gifts we have can now be used and offered to God as a living sacrifice before the Lord. So, it begs the question, “How has God equipped you to serve with the greater body of Christ?”

Reflection Questions

1. Take some time to write down your top 5 strengths and weaknesses.
2. What might it look like to see your strengths as something God intends for you to use to serve Him?
3. What patterns do you have in place to allow God to shape the way you think?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for creating me with unique gifts. Help me to know how You intend for me to use those gifts for Your purpose. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 39: Saturday, April 4, 2020 – A Psalm for Saturday

Bible Reading : Psalm 130



Devotional Thought

Sentries stand watch through the night. There are two things that come to mind. First, dawn meant the end of the shift. We can all relate to the feeling of finally being off and able to go home and get some rest. Second, the dawn meant the likelihood of an attack was significantly lower. Most attacks would come in the secret of the night when it was harder to detect. What relief to have made it through another night without an attack!? That's how we long for the Lord!

As we honestly evaluate ourselves, we will find things that do not make us proud. We will wrestle with hurts that we have caused and sins that we have not mastered. It's in that moment that the psalmist reminds us that God does not keep a record of sin, plotting ways to punish us. In fact, He offers forgiveness plotting ways to redeem us from our sin. And that is something that we long for from the very depths of our being.

Reflection Questions

1. As you consider your sin, what specific sins stand out to you today?
2. How does this text provide encouragement in the face of those sins?
3. What might it look like to return to this passage on a more regular basis, receiving God's forgiveness anew each day?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for hearing my cry for help and responding with Your unfailing love. Help me to fully trust Your forgiveness and live in newness of life and hope. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 40 : Palm Sunday – The Humble Servant

April 5, 2020

Bible Reading : John 12:12-19



Devotional Thought

I was sitting in the upper deck of the Astrodome. It was during the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Each night had a concert and this was the night we were going to see Garth Brooks perform. The lights went out and everyone began to grow in anticipation. It was about to begin. Then a single spot light shone on something near the ceiling. There he was! But wait, he was falling from the roof!!! Oh wait; HE'S ZIPLINING TO THE STAGE! What an entrance!

An entrance sets the stage for what's to come. Jesus rides into Jerusalem and takes a clear stance. Peace! Riding in on a donkey was a sign of peace. Our king was clearly going to do things differently. Having already demonstrated His power through the raising of Lazarus, Jesus was now showing how influential it can be to choose not to use power. The end is near. His mission is almost accomplished.

Reflection Questions

1. As you see the crowds come to Jesus as He enters Jerusalem, how does their excitement to see Him impact you?
2. Is it frustrating or impressive that Jesus chooses not to exercise His power?
3. Did you notice the people sharing about Jesus to others? What would it look like to do that today?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus to enter into a volatile environment with a mission of peace. Help me to know how to share His message and mission with others who need to see His work for them. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 41: Monday, April 6, 2020

Bible Reading : Philippians 2:5-11



Devotional Thought

As of 2019, 79% of the workforce in the United States is in the service industry. Almost 4 out of 5 people you encounter work in an industry that says, “You’re number one.” So, we spend most of our lives hearing that we should expect to be served. Burger King hammered that home for 40 years with a slogan, “Have it your way.” In short, we are constantly being told in subtle and not so subtle ways that the world revolves around us.

The Apostle Paul reminds us that Jesus has a different way. Even though He could, He chose not to flaunt His divinity. Instead, He decided to put others first. He decided to assume the lowest position to serve others. In a strange way, our culture provides a great opportunity. If we are looking from the perspective of the servant, then we have ample opportunity to serve others with the love of Christ. We are the most like Christ, when we are sacrificing for others out of love.

Reflection Questions

1. In what context do you find yourself wanting to be at the center of it all, where you’re most important?
2. In what context do you find yourself serving others more frequently?
3. How does it shape your perspective that the Savior of the world chose to be a servant to all?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for demonstrating a life of service and humility through Jesus. Help me to live more like Him each day as I learn to serve others on your behalf. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 42: Tuesday, April 7, 2020

Bible Reading : Isaiah 50:4-9



Devotional Thought

Picture this. You buy a new piece of equipment. You open the box and grab the owner's manual and you study it. In fact, you read it several times, you highlight important information, and you even write notes in the margins about how great life will be if you use this new piece of equipment. Then, you never use it! I know! You're thinking, "That's crazy! No one would do that!" Well, consider the words of wisdom that God has poured into you. Consider your access to God's word and the way you use it. For many who venture into God's word, it has become a studying exercise for the sake of knowledge and little is done with it in everyday life.

Isaiah shares how God's words of wisdom actually result in a way of living life. In many ways, it is a way that doesn't look like what we are used to seeing around us. Nevertheless, God calls us to be a people who listen to His word and then we are doers of that word. Even in the face of discomfort or suffering, we are a people who follow Jesus and imitate His ways.

Reflection Questions

1. What context in your life makes it difficult to live a faithful Christian life?
2. Consider people or places in your life that are not hospitable to your Christian faith.
3. What does it look like to remain faithful in every context of life? (Be specific)

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for giving me Your words of wisdom. Help me to remain faithful to You no matter what others say or do. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 43: Wednesday, April 8, 2020

Bible Reading : John 12:20-33



Devotional Thought

It is a classic moment during military movies. The leader stands in front of the soldiers and gives a speech. At the end of that speech, the leader gives everyone the option to remain and fight or to return home to their families. Have you ever thought of how you would respond? Most people are only comfortable continuing on in life if they are certain of their safety. In this case, it's more likely that you will die.

This is one of the things that makes these moments with Jesus so powerful. Jesus knew that He was on a mission that would result in His death. The people that were drawn to Him were given warning after warning that this was the case. Even still, He continues on demonstrating unwavering commitment to His Heavenly Father and His people. Now, verse 26 rings in my ears. Those who serve Jesus go where He goes. That means we follow Jesus, sacrificing for others, out into the world. We demonstrate unwavering commitment to our Heavenly Father and to His people. Where Jesus goes, His people follow.

Reflection Questions

1. Where is Jesus taking you to serve others?
2. What places are more difficult for you to go as you follow Jesus?
3. How does it shape your perspective to know Jesus was obedient to death in order to save you?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus to passionately fight for me and die for me. Help me to follow Him wherever He might go on His mission to save all people. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 44 : Maundy Thursday

April 9, 2020

Bible Reading : John 13:1-17



Devotional Thought

I love the show “Undercover Boss”. CEOs and owners, disguise themselves and spend time working with their everyday employees. They learn so much and sometimes it’s hard lessons about the way the people view their leadership. In the end, there is a reveal. The undercover boss reveals their true identity and shares a moment of surprise and appreciation.

Jesus puts on the attire of a servant. To those who knew Jesus, this wasn’t ok. They wanted Him at the place of honor at their table. But, to Jesus, this was no disguise. Jesus wanted them and us to understand that He chooses to lead in a different way. He chooses to take the place of a humble servant so others would experience His love and compassion. In doing so, He modeled for us a powerful way to live our lives as humble servants lifting others up.

Reflection Questions

1. What opportunities do you have to exercise influence by serving the needs of others?
2. What keeps you from being able to spend time serving others on behalf of Jesus?
3. How does Jesus’ way of serving challenge leadership principles in our culture today?

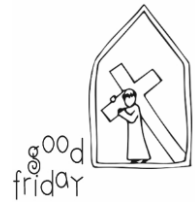
Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for showing me what it looks like to truly care for others. Help me to see how my influence gives me an opportunity to share compassion and love. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 45 : Good Friday – Mission Accomplished

April 10, 2020

Bible Reading : John 19:17-30



Devotional Thought

It's a hard day. We watch Jesus suffer and die. We revisit or visit for the first time the way that Jesus allows so many terrible things to happen. Make no mistake, this was all meant for us. We sin, He doesn't. We are broken, He isn't. We are disobedient, He obeys. This was our burden to bear. Instead, Jesus carries a cross to His execution sight. He bears the weight of the sins of the world. What does He do with some of His final words? He makes sure His family is taken care of. He makes sure that Mary has a place to call home. In many ways, He was dying on that cross to do the same for us. He was making sure that we have a family. He was making sure that we have a place to call home for all of eternity. After a determined life lived on a mission, "It is finished." Mission accomplished.

Reflection Questions

1. What does it mean to you that Jesus chose to die to pay for your sins?
2. What does it mean to you that Jesus has adopted you into His family?
3. What does it look like to extend care to your brothers and sisters in Christ?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Your son to die for me, paying the price for my sin. Help me to live each day in the new life that He has purchased for me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 46 : Holy Saturday – A Psalm for Saturday

April 11, 2020

Bible Reading : Psalm 118:19-29



Devotional Thought

As of late, I've become more interested in the Tour de France. It's a series of 21 grueling stages that require cycling all day in most cases. There's a lot to keep track of with multiple "races" imbedded in the larger overall competition. Of course, the yellow jersey is the highest of honors, indicating the overall leader of the race. There is one interesting dynamic with the final stage. It's pretty much a victory stage. Whoever has the yellow jersey at the end of stage 20 is the unofficial victor of the tour. As you watch the last stage, living in victory is noticeable. The yellow jersey doesn't seem so heavy and the rider is actually enjoying the ride. Expressions of anxiety have been traded in for expressions of happiness and joy!

On the cross, Jesus delivered a decisive blow to Satan. The sin that resulted in death no longer has power over us. The consequences of our sin have been fulfilled. The price has been paid. We now live in victory over Satan. And, spoiler alert, tomorrow is Easter and the tomb will be empty. Victory over death waits! So, we are living in stage 21. It's a victory lap. We get to trade in expressions of despair with expressions of joy! We get to live life knowing the end! So, go enjoy your victory lap, praising your Heavenly Father whose faithful love endures forever!

Reflection Questions

1. How does it change your perspective to view life as a victory lap in Christ?
2. In what ways do you express your praise and appreciation for God's never ending love?
3. How does it make you feel that Jesus has opened up the gates of Heaven to you?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your never ending love. Stir up a sense of joy and happiness in me as I live in the victory Jesus has won for me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 47 : Easter - Like & Share #EmptyTomb

April 12, 2020

Bible Reading : John 20:1-18



Devotional Thought

Have you noticed that excitement often provokes movement? If you're sitting down and you get excited, you almost involuntarily have to stand up to celebrate! My children get excited and almost always do that classic lap around the house down the hallway, through the living room, and back to the kitchen.

Today is Easter! Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed, alleluia!

In our gospel, we see two different exciting moments. A couple of the disciples get wind of an empty tomb and what do they do? They run! They run to find out what is real. Then they discovered the truth. Not that the tomb was really empty, but the truth that Jesus was indeed raised from the dead like He shared with the disciples.

Then, Mary has an exciting encounter with the risen Lord. What is her response? She went to tell the disciples that she actually saw Jesus! Can you imagine the overwhelming sense of excitement?

Now, you have seen that Jesus has overcome death and risen from the tomb, paving the way for us to follow Him into eternal life! How exciting is that!? Now, we get to run and tell those we love that Christ is Risen!

Reflection Questions

1. What excites you about Easter?
2. Who comes to mind when you think of running to tell others the exciting news of the empty tomb?
3. What might it look like to live in this excitement each day as Easter people who celebrate the resurrection?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for overcoming death through the resurrection of Jesus Christ! Help me to share this powerful truth with the people I love, that they would also trust Jesus in life and in death. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Notes & Reflections



TRINITY LUTHERAN
Find us online at trinluth.org

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Traditional Worship
8:00 and 11:00 AM

Contemporary Worship
9:30 AM

SUNDAY EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Adult and Youth Bible Studies
8:15 and 9:30 AM

Children's Ministry 3 years - 5th grade
8:15 and 9:30 AM

WEDNESDAY LENTEN WORSHIP

4:15 & 6:00 PM

Lenten meals are served each Wednesday in the church gym from 4:30-6:00PM

EASTER WORSHIP

Sunday, April 12, 2020

Sunrise Service 6:00AM

Traditional Worship with Communion 8:00AM

Contemporary Worship 10:00AM

Easter Breakfast is served in the church gym from 7:00-10AM