



Lent

MEDITATIONS 2024

TRAC Board of Worship & Music

Foreword

The season of Lent takes us on a 40-day journey recalling the events leading up to and including Jesus' crucifixion, with its culmination on Resurrection Sunday. On this side of the resurrection, Christians understand the impact and significance of the cross so much more than Jesus' first disciples did. If the cost of grace, this gift of life, this victory over sin and death, fails to move us and draw us to deep repentance, profound humility, and heartfelt thanksgiving, then we have yet to truly grasp how sinful we are, and how holy God is. This gift needs to be remembered, savoured, and treasured. As you enter this journey, we pray that your hearts will be touched once again by the wonder of the cross, and your spirits be moved to reach the lost, the least, and the lonely, with the Good News that God loved the world so much that He gave us His one and only Son to save us from sin and death, that we could be reconciled to Him and be called His sons and daughters.

SEEKING GOD'S PROMISE OF A NEW HEART

*Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me ... Create in me a pure heart, O God ...
(Psalm 51:5, 10)*

Day
1

Ash Wednesday
14 February 2024

We often think what makes us sinners is sinful attitudes, and things we do, say, and think that go against what God wants. But the Bible says we have been sinners from the moment our mothers conceived us ... before we said a word or even thought of doing anything bad! That's because our sins are more than sinful actions, words, thoughts, or attitudes. Our problem is the stubborn sin nature that we were born with. That's the bad news.

But the good news is that our sin nature died with Jesus on the cross when we believed in Him. Therefore, God can now create within us new natures complete with pure, new hearts. This is God's promise to those who believe in what Jesus did on the cross. God declared: *"I will give you a new heart ... I will remove ... your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh"* (Ezekiel 36:26).

In Old Testament times, God refused to receive broken animals as sacrifices, but Christ's perfect sacrifice on the cross paved the way for us to come to the Father even when we are sinful and broken. He wants us to approach Him in humble repentance.

Bible Reading:

□ Psalm 51:1-17



Dig Deeper:

As you begin Lent today, will you allow God's searchlight to examine your heart to see if there is anything hidden in you that is offensive to Him?

Reflection: Do you want God to give you a pure, new heart? Will you give Him a broken and repentant heart this Lent?



Lord, thank You for Jesus' sacrifice on the cross that dealt with my stubborn sin nature, and enabled me to be born again with a pure, new heart. Amen.

Day
2
Thursday
15 February 2024

SEEKING GOD'S RESTORATION WHEN DEALING WITH SHAME

"Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame ... in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to you." (Daniel 9:7)

Bible Reading:
☐ Daniel 9:4-11

The Israelites constantly disobeyed God. So, God finally scattered them to foreign countries and poured on them the curses written in the Law of Moses for disobedience. No wonder they were covered with shame.

All of us have struggled with shame at some point in our lives. We experience shame because of things we have done, or things others have done to us; like being abused or mocked in public. Shame makes us feel unacceptable and unclean; that nobody wants to be around us. It makes us want to hide. So, we hide behind entertainment and social media platforms like Netflix and Instagram, and emotions like anger and moodiness. But these are wrong places to hide.



Dig Deeper:
What are some places you tend to hide behind when you experience shame? Are they stopping you from reaching the potential God has planned for you?

There is only one place to hide that offers us the protection we seek: the cross of Christ. Jesus took all our shame on Himself as He hung on the cross, and promised that those who put their hope in God will never be put to shame (Psalm 25:3). As we open our hearts to Jesus, He replaces our rejection with acceptance, brokenness with wholeness, isolation with belonging. Shame will lose its power over us. We can come out of hiding and stand unashamed before God and people.

Reflection: If shame hits you, who can you turn to for help to come out of hiding, that you might stand unashamed before God and others?



Thank You, Jesus, for taking my shame upon Yourself and restoring me so that I no longer need to hide in wrong places. You are my only hiding place. Amen.

SEEKING GOD'S GLORY THROUGH OBEDIENCE

"Lord, listen! Lord, forgive! Lord, hear and act! For your sake, my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name." (Daniel 9:19)

Day
3

Friday
16 February 2024

Daniel prayed to God to deliver His people: *"For YOUR sake ... because YOUR city and YOUR people bear YOUR Name."* Delivering His people and giving them another chance to live obedient lives would bring glory to God. It was for God's glory that Daniel prayed so fervently!

Bible Reading:

□ Daniel 9:15-19

Jesus brought glory to God throughout His entire earthly life. At His birth the angels sang, *"Glory to God in the highest"*. Jesus glorified God by living a life of perfect obedience to God. But His greatest display of God's glory began at Gethsemane. His soul was crushed with sorrow to the point of death, yet Jesus chose to obey God: *"Not My will, but Yours be done"*. His complete submission to His Father's will glorified God to the highest.



Dig Deeper:

Our lives will always be shaped by the pursuit of some kind of glory because God created us to be glory-oriented people. Whose glory are you pursuing – yours or God's?

We glorify God by imitating Christ's obedience to Him. We do this daily by taking responsibility to choose God's ways over our self-centred ways in every situation. Then in the Holy Spirit's power, we live our lives like Christ, bringing glory to the Father. The result will be a life of significance and satisfaction. *"God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him."* - John Piper, Let the Nations be Glad

Reflection: Are you choosing to live a life of obedience to God every day?



Lord, grant me grace and faith to say with the Apostle Paul, "God forbid that I should glory, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ". Amen.

Day 4

Saturday
17 February 2024

SEEKING GOD'S FORGIVENESS THROUGH CONFESSION

*When I kept silent, my bones wasted away ...
Then I acknowledged my sin to you ...
And you forgave the guilt of my sin. (Psalm 32:3, 5)*

Bible Reading:

☐ Psalm 32

David wrote Psalm 32 as a prayer, confessing his sin against Bathsheba and her husband. When David kept silent about his sin, it cost him intense emotional and physical pain. It was only after he confessed his sin to God and repented that David knew the joy of God's forgiveness.

Jesus' death gave us power to not commit sin. However, we simply cannot press a "delete" button in our minds to cancel the old ways of thinking and behaving that we learned before we came to Christ. So, at times, we still choose to live independently of God and continue to sin. But God provided a way out for us: "*If we confess our sins, He ... will forgive us our sins ...*" (1 John 1:9). Despite our failures, there is forgiveness – a forgiveness based on Christ's sacrifice. Through the cross, Jesus' righteousness became the Christian's righteousness. In this way, our sins are covered, and God will not hold it against us ... when we confess.

Confession of sin should be a normal, necessary, and ongoing practice throughout a Christian's life. God is always ready to forgive us, and repentance and confession of sin is the way to receive it.



Dig Deeper:

Do you grieve over your sins? Or do you excuse them as mere human weaknesses, and harden your heart against the conviction of the Holy Spirit?

Reflection: Do you feel like you can't help but sin? What do you do when you know you have done wrong?



Father, thank You for the blessing of forgiveness that I experience because of Christ's sacrifice. May the confession of my sins be an ongoing practice in my life. Amen.

A Lenten Hymn



AND CAN IT BE THAT I SHOULD GAIN?

Author: Charles Wesley, 1739; © Public Domain

Let's worship together: <https://bit.ly/lent24-sun1>

1st

Sunday in Lent
18 February 2024

And can it be that I should gain
an interest in the Saviour's blood!
Died he for me? who caused his pain!
For me? who him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be
that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

'Tis mystery all: th'Immortal dies!
Who can explore his strange design?
In vain the firstborn seraph tries
to sound the depths of love divine.
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore;
let angel minds inquire no more.

He left his Father's throne above,
(so free, so infinite his grace!),
emptied himself of all but love,
and bled for Adam's helpless race.
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
for O my God, it found out me!

Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
fast bound in sin and nature's night;
thine eye diffused a quickening ray;
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
my chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.

No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in him, is mine;
alive in him, my living Head,
and clothed in righteousness divine;
bold I approach th'eternal throne,
and claim the crown, through Christ my own.



Day
5
Monday
19 February 2024

IN TIMES OF TROUBLE – ACTIVELY SEEK GOD

*I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me.
(Psalm 77:1-2)*

Bible Reading:

□ Psalm 77



Dig Deeper:

*Think of ways to
cultivate a daily
habit of remembering
God's goodness in
your life.*

Times of suffering are a reality of life. During such times, we often seek an explanation, and ask the perennial question, “Why me?” Difficult times also often cause us to feel that God is distant. “Has God abandoned me? Is God angry and punishing me? Does God really love me?” These are some questions we wrestle with during such times.

But the psalmist urges us to seek God actively and persistently. He reminds us to turn our eyes from the problems we face and look to God in prayer. We are to recall the Lord’s good deeds towards us, and to remember His miracles of long ago. Thinking back on the goodness of God and the miracles He performed in the past gives us the confidence and assurance that the God who was able to save His people then, is able to save us now. Not only is He able to rescue us, we can also be confident that He most certainly will.

Reflection: Are you going through a difficult time? Invite the Lord to remind you of His goodness.



Lord, during times of difficulties, help us to be still and know that You are God as we remember Your goodness and greatness. Amen.

URGED TO TRUST GOD IN LIFE'S LOSSES

"But if it were I, I would appeal to God; I would lay my cause before him." (Job 5:8)

Day

6

Tuesday

20 February 2024

Job was a man described as blameless and upright. He feared God and he turned away from evil. He was a man who had everything, but he found himself losing all of it. Experiencing losses in life is painful and often depressing. It is in the midst of such a depressing situation that Job was urged to trust in God.

Eliphaz urged Job to trust in God by appealing to Him because He was sovereign. God performs wonders and miracles that cannot be explained, and He is in control of the universe. Eliphaz mentioned that God might have allowed Job to experience losses in order to discipline him. However, God would not leave him in his pain - He wounds, but He also heals us; He disciplines, but He also restores.

We are not alone in experiencing losses in life. As we recall the life of Jesus, we know that Jesus had to lose His life in order for us to gain ours. Throughout His journey to the cross, Christ knew and had counted His losses, yet He trusted in God's ultimate will for His life. In the same way, let us also trust God in our losses.

Bible Reading:

□ Job 5:8-27



Dig Deeper:

How have the losses you experienced in life hindered or strengthened your walk with God?

Reflection: Have you recently experienced a loss? Are you able to surrender it to God?



Lord, help me to continue to trust in You when I experience losses. Give me the courage to surrender all my losses to You for You are sovereign. Amen.

Day
7

Wednesday
21 February 2024

GIVE ME JUST ENOUGH, LORD

*Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only
my daily bread. (Proverbs 30:8b)*

Bible Reading:

□ Proverbs 30:1-9

The need for financial stability can sometimes drive us to chase after monetary gains. As the cost of living and healthcare services keep increasing, it seems prudent that we don't just strive to have enough to live by, but we should have a financial buffer for ourselves so that we have some measure of security and control over our financial position.

However, in today's text, Agur's confidence in God as his provider is seen through his humble request for the Lord to give him "just enough". He asks that God would not give him too much for he may be tempted to forget God; nor to give too little, lest he dishonours God by sinning. He recognises that it is God who provides for him. To ask God to provide only for our daily needs can challenge our sense of security. We tend to worry about tomorrow.

But as we reflect on the life of Jesus, let us remember the prayer He taught us: "*Give us today our daily bread.*" Jesus urged us to not worry about our food, our drink or what we shall wear, for our Heavenly Father knows exactly what we need (Matthew 6:31-32).



Dig Deeper:

Ask the Lord for the faith to pray: "Give me only my daily bread."

Reflection: Are you satisfied with what you have? Ask God to teach you greater trust in Him.



Lord, help me to trust in Your providence and be satisfied with all that You supply. Amen.

A TANGIBLE SIGN OF A SURE PROMISE

He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars - if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." (Genesis 15:5)

Day
8

Thursday
22 February 2024

How many of us are able to hold unswervingly to God's promises? One reason we may struggle to do this is because God's timing and our timing are often very different. God had promised to make Abraham into a great nation; that through Abraham, He would bless all peoples on earth. He affirmed Abraham by saying, *"Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."*

"Reward!? What can you give me since I remain childless?" This was not a sarcastic question but one that reflected Abraham's struggle between God's promise and his present reality. How was it possible that God was going to bless others through him when he remained childless? Many of us struggle to trust in the promises of God because our reality contradicts it.

Nonetheless, God remains steadfastly faithful. While Isaac was the long-awaited fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham, Jesus was the ultimate fulfilment of the Abrahamic promises. Through Abraham, Israel became a great nation, but through Christ, a holy nation and a royal priesthood was established - that's us!

Bible Reading:

□ Genesis 15:1-6



Dig Deeper:

Talk to the Lord about any promises that are slow in being fulfilled. Ask Him to give you the peace to trust in His perfect timing.

Reflection: Are you struggling to trust God? Ask Him to reveal how He is carrying you through this time.



Lord, help me to trust in Your promises. And when my life's circumstances pose a challenge, teach me to trust in You, the God of promises. Amen.

Day

9

Friday

23 February 2024

THE WAIT IS TOO LONG

... So she said to Abram, "The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her." (Genesis 16:2)

Bible Reading:

□ Genesis 16:1-6



Dig Deeper:

Are you tempted to take things into your own hands when God delays in answering your prayers?

The wait was too long. Abram and Sarai knew the promises of God. They knew that God intended for them to have a son, but the wait was getting too long. As they were growing older each year, they could not see how God's promise of an heir was going to come through.

And so, Sarai came up with an idea. An idea which was a common practice back then. It was common to have another woman - in this case, Hagar - to step in and assist in producing an heir. However, this idea was a reflection of unbelief in the very promise that God had given Abram.

Abram and Sarai acted on their unbelief instead of holding steadfastly to God, the Promise Giver. When we are not able to make sense of the timing of God in fulfilling His promises, we must trust in God who is the Giver of Promises. Abram and Sarai failed to trust God although they knew His promise for them was to have an heir.

Reflection: Reflect on your unanswered prayers - is God really silent, or is He saying "Yes", "No" or "Wait"?



Dear Lord, give me the courage to remain steadfast in You and not succumb to unbelief when I fail to see You at work in fulfilling Your promises. Amen.

YOU ARE THE GOD WHO SEES ME!

She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me." (Genesis 16:13)

Day
10

Saturday
24 February 2024

Hagar's refusal to submit to Sarai led to her being mistreated. It became so bad that Hagar had to run away. Hagar found herself in a helpless situation with no direction. And it was in this helpless situation with nothing to hold on to that God found her. When she was alone by the spring in the desert, the angel of the Lord came to her.

The words of the angel, "... *for the Lord has heard of your misery*" must have brought immense comfort to Hagar. God in His mercy acknowledged the pain and misery that Hagar was experiencing. Often, just like Hagar, we find ourselves alone in our pain and misery. We long to be seen and heard. Thus, her personal encounter with God moved Hagar to declare God as a "God who sees".

Jesus understands us because He was alone in His pain and misery when He hung on the cross. Although God saw His Son's suffering, He looked beyond the cross to the victory that was to come. Christ's victory is now our victory, and as we go through our struggles, we can be confident that we will triumph in the end with the Lord's help.

Bible Reading:

□ Genesis 16:7-15



Dig Deeper:

Are you feeling alone in your struggles? Ask God to remind you of a time when He had touched you in a deep and personal way. Be assured that He is still the God who sees you.

Reflection: Do you feel like running away from a difficult situation? Run to God instead.



Dear Lord, You are a God who sees me. Help me to trust that You are a God who understands me. Amen.

A Lenten Hymn



THINE BE THE GLORY, RISEN, CONQUERING SON

Author: Edmond Louis Budry, 1904;

Translator: Richard Birch Hoyle, 1923; © Public Domain

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2nd

Sunday in Lent
25 February 2024

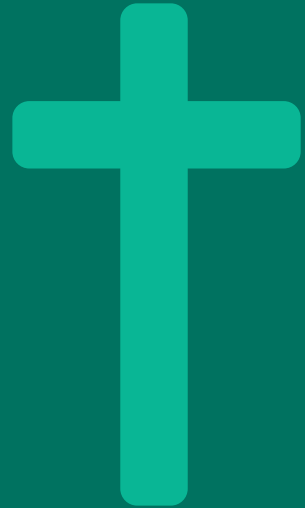
Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son;
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave-clothes where thy body lay.

Refrain:

Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son;
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.

Lo! Jesus meets thee, risen from the tomb;
lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom.
Let the church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,
for the Lord now liveth; death hath lost its sting.

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life!
Life is naught without thee; aid us in our strife.
Make us more than conquerors, through thy deathless love;
bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above.



GOD, THE PROMISE KEEPER

*He remembers his covenant forever, the promise he made,
for a thousand generations ... (Psalm 105:8)*

Day
11

Monday
26 February 2024

The word “remember” is often used in Scripture in connection with the promises between God and people. In Genesis 9, after the flood, God set a rainbow in the sky as a sign of His covenant, “*When I see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on earth*” (Genesis 9:16). God makes a promise and keeps His promise for eternity. The inheritance of eternal life when we surrender our life to Jesus is a fulfilment of God’s promise. “*To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion you will inherit*” (Psalm 105:11).

On the strength of God’s promise, we will surely land on Canaan’s side and be with God forever through faith in Jesus Christ. His death and resurrection paved the way for that. God chose us to be in a love relationship with Him forever and that is His purpose and will for our lives. Ephesians 1:5 (NLT) says, “*God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do and it gave him great pleasure.*”

Bible Reading:

□ Psalm 105:1-11



Dig Deeper:

List down some ways the knowledge of God’s great love for us and His faithful promises to us can help us face life’s challenges.

Reflection: John 17:23 tells us God loves us just as much as He loves His Son, Jesus. How does this encourage you in your relationship with your Heavenly Father?



Our Father in heaven, help us to live according to Your ways and to bring You pleasure in every area of our lives.
In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

Day
12

Tuesday
27 February 2024

JESUS, THE LIVING BREAD

They asked, and he brought them quail; he fed them well with the bread of heaven. (Psalm 105:40)

Bible Reading:

□ Psalm 105:37-45



Dig Deeper:

What would help you to partake of the Living Bread and pursue personal holiness in your daily walk with Jesus?

God led the Israelites through the wilderness and provided for their physical and spiritual needs. God used the clouds as a covering during the day and provided fire during the night for light. He fed them manna from heaven to satisfy their hunger and split a rock so water gushed out to quench their thirst. What the Israelites experienced in this Scripture text is God as a redeeming God.

In the New Testament, God showed redemption through His Son, Jesus Christ. In John 6:51, Jesus says *"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."* God provided divine food for the Israelites until they reached the Promised Land. By the same analogy, Jesus is the living bread that was sent from heaven so that all people could believe, participate in His life, and be led into eternity with God. God wants us to pursue a living relationship with Jesus - to engage with Him and enjoy being with Him daily, instead of indulging in worldly pleasures.

(See UMH 127: Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah)

Reflection: How does reading the Bible daily feed your soul?



Dear Lord, thank You for providing for our daily needs. Give us grace and strength to be Your witnesses and pursue holiness in all we do. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

UP FROM THE ASHES, HOPE WILL ARISE

*“But I will restore you to health and heal your wounds,”
declares the Lord ...” (Jeremiah 30:17)*

Day
13

Wednesday
28 February 2024

Have you experimented with clay to create something, but it turned out looking the total opposite of what you had in mind? In such a situation, sometimes the best solution is to start afresh. The image of tearing down and rebuilding is used in the Scripture passage today to remind us that God does not allow sin to go unpunished and His punishment is “*only in due measure*” as our sin deserves (v. 11).

However, God reveals that His heart is not to destroy us forever, but to restore us in love so that we would become His people, and He would be our God (v. 22). God’s solution to restore a broken world is to send His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins and restore us into a right relationship with Him. As you journey through this Lent season, take a moment to confess your sins before God and allow His loving, gentle Spirit to lead you on the path of transformation and joyful restoration. Sometimes, the best way out of our brokenness is to allow God to tear down the walls of guilt and shame, and restore us to become a new creation in Christ.

Bible Reading:

□ Jeremiah 30:12-22



Dig Deeper:

Allow the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind one area in your life that needs tearing down and restoring through the love of Jesus.

Reflection: Are there any bad habits in your life that you want to confess and ask God for forgiveness and the power to change?



Lord, thank You for Your love that covers a multitude of sins.
Give us strength to lead transformed lives so that we can
experience victory through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Day 14

Thursday
29 February 2024

CHOSEN TO BE HOLY

*"Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession."
(Exodus 19:5)*

Bible Reading:

□ Exodus 19:1-9a

From the beginning of creation, God initiated conversation with those He created. He longed to have a living relationship where His commands and purposes would be obeyed. In Psalm 19, it is written, *"The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple."* God reminded His people time and again that if they kept His covenant, they would be His *"treasured possession"*.

Despite the Israelites' complaints against God, God never rejected Israel in the desert. Even though God is powerful, and the earth belongs to Him, yet He chose Israel to be a holy nation through whom the world would know there is a Saviour. God could have chosen any vessel or instrument to obey His commands, yet He chose a fallen people and gave them the freedom to obey Him. Israel was so precious to God that His plan of salvation was carried through them, down the line of David, and ultimately through the person of Jesus Christ. This season of Lent, may we remember we are chosen to live Christ-centred and holy lives that point others to the gospel of Jesus Christ, His death, and resurrection.



Dig Deeper:

How would you respond knowing God chose you to witness for Jesus Christ and testify to His salvation for the world?

Reflection: What does it mean for God to choose you even though you have been disobedient?



Father, You have called us to repentance and a life of obedience. Give us the strength to make the right choices so that Christ may be glorified in us. Amen.

CHRIST, OUR MEDIATOR

The Lord said to Moses, "I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, so that the people will hear me speaking with you and will always put their trust in you." (Exodus 19:9)

Day
15
Friday
1 March 2024

In today's Scripture passage, God speaks to His people through His prophet, Moses. Moses was hand-picked to be His mediator to speak to the Israelites. No one could approach God unless he followed strictly the instructions for consecration, and kept himself pure from sin. Imagine if this were still the law today - no one would stand as righteous and be able to approach God! It is written, "... *all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23).

In the new covenant, however, God has written His law in our hearts. We can boldly approach the throne of God through faith in Jesus Christ. The Son of God has become our mediator. Jesus said, "*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*" (John 14:6). Jesus' death and resurrection has paid the price for our sins and His sacrifice bought us a direct access ticket to the Father. What then, is your posture before God and Jesus Christ, who is seated at the right hand of the Father, as He speaks to you today directly through the Holy Spirit?

Bible Reading:

□ Exodus 19:9-15



Dig Deeper:

What are some practical ways to offer ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God?

Reflection: Meet with God and identify areas in Your life that He is prompting you to offer to Him.



Heavenly Father, thank You for the righteousness that comes through faith in Jesus, and for the freedom we have to approach You in prayer and worship because of Him. Amen.

Day
16
Saturday
2 March 2024

FEEDING ON GOD'S WORD

*The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple.
(Psalm 19:7)*

Bible Reading:

☐ Psalm 19



Dig Deeper:

Consider how much you would grow spiritually when you fit in time each day to engage with the Word of God. Make a commitment to feed on His Word daily.

Psalm 19:1-4 tells us that God's voice, whether spoken or unspoken, goes out into all the earth and to the ends of the world. One of the tangible ways to engage with God is through nature and the Holy Scriptures. Nature is never silent - "*day after day*" and "*night after night*" they pour forth speech. What does nature speak about? That there is a Creator God who created the earth and all its creatures to live under His sovereignty.

When we spend time reading the Bible and meditating on it daily, there are valuable experiences in store for us: the Word of God refreshes our soul (v. 7), it brings joy to our hearts (v. 8), it gives insight for living (v. 8). The law of the Lord is fair and just (v. 9), and there is great reward for those who obey (v. 11). Engaging with God's Word reveals our sin and our need for God's forgiveness. Would you meditate on His word today in a more tangible way? Read Psalm 19 aloud and take a walk in the garden or at the park or the beach, and hear God speak to you.

Reflection: God's Word feeds your soul just like food feeds your body. What does this mean to you?



Father God, give us an increase of appetite for Your Word, so that we may grow in our spiritual walk and be faithful witnesses for Christ. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

A Lenten Hymn



NOW THE GREEN BLADE RISETH

Author: John Macleod Campbell Crum, 1928; © Public Domain

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3rd

Sunday in Lent
3 March 2024

Now the green blade riseth, from the buried grain,
wheat that in the dark earth many days has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.

In the grave they laid Him, Love who had been slain,
thinking that he never would awake again,
laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.

Forth He came at Easter, like the risen grain,
Jesus who for three days in the grave had lain;
quick from the dead my risen Lord is seen:
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.

When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,
Jesus' touch can call us back to life again,
fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.



Day
17
Monday
4 March 2024

THE INEVITABLE JOURNEY

Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. (Psalm 84:5)

Bible Reading:

□ Psalm 84

It is often said that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. However, the first step can be the most challenging, especially when we are reminded of the challenges ahead.

The psalmist is captivated by the beauty of God's presence (v. 2) and acknowledges it as the ultimate place of rest and contentment ... his home. Yet, to reach such a place, he must embark on a journey that will lead him through the Valley of Baka, a place of tears, hardships and sorrows (v. 6).

God promises breakthroughs and blessings to those who undertake this journey. *"They make it a spring; the rain also covers it with pools. They will go from strength to strength ..."* (v. 6). The promise of reaching the ultimate destination is assured, even though there will be tears along the way.

During the season of Lent, we are invited to walk on this pathway to God's presence. Blessed are those whose hearts are set on this pilgrimage (v. 5). In Luke 9:51, we read about Jesus Himself undertaking such a journey. Since He has gone ahead of us, we may be confident that He is able to help us in our weaknesses (Hebrews 4:15).



Dig Deeper:

Share one fear or hesitation that you are confronted with in taking on this spiritual journey.

Reflection: Think of one step you need to take to be closer to God.



Dear God, I long for more of Your presence. Please guide me on this journey towards You. Thank You that I can depend on You for breakthroughs and blessings. Amen.

CLEARING THE RUBBISH

"Hear me, Levites! Now sanctify yourselves, sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry out the rubbish from the holy place. (2 Chronicles 29:5b; NKJV)"

Day
18
Tuesday
5 March 2024

It must have surprised you to read that there was 'rubbish' in God's temple (see Jeremiah 32:34; Ezekiel 8). Not just in any corner, but in the holy place. You may be wondering how such a thing could have ever happened!

King Hezekiah explained that it was because of the sins of their forefathers; they had rejected God; they had *"turned their backs on Him"* (v. 6b). When God is rejected, rubbish (idols) begins to pile up in the sacred spaces of our lives.

King Hezekiah was not afraid to expose such filth that filled the temple. He recognised that getting back into a right relationship with God (v.10) involves exposing such embarrassment.

As we continue this spiritual pilgrimage, it is important that we exercise courage and humility to deal with the rubbish in our lives. Part of God's sanctification work is to shine His light on the hidden things in us to liberate us.

Today, we can embark on this journey because Jesus has made a way for our sanctification. He, who knew no sin, became sin (2 Corinthians 5:21) so that we can be forgiven. Let us come and be cleansed.

Bible Reading:

□ 2 Chronicles 29:1-11



Dig Deeper:

By God's grace, confess and repent of a particular 'rubbish' that is in your heart.

Reflection: Can you share one thing that you need to stop doing in your life to be close to God?



Father, I confess to You this rubbish ____ (name it).
I renounce it. Please remove it from my life and help
me to draw nearer to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 19

Wednesday
6 March 2024

CRITICAL MOMENTS

And they built and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the command of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. (Ezra 6:14; NKJV)

Bible Reading:

□ Ezra 6:1-16

There is a time and space in-between the declaration of God's promise and its fulfilment. It is the moment when we are confronted with our fears. It is a scary and frightening place to be in. Yet, it is where character is forged, and faith in God's Word is embedded into the life of a believer; where dry and hostile ground becomes a spring (Psalm 84:6).

The people returned from exile to fulfil God's promise of rebuilding His temple. God had moved the heart of King Cyrus with the call to rebuild. However, this journey of rebuilding brought them face-to-face with their enemies. The fear of people (see Ezra 3:3), discouragements, opposition (Ezra 4:4), and political maneuverings of their enemies robbed them of the trust to experience the fulfilment of God's promise.

Yet, as the people in that situation believed in God's Word spoken through His servants (v. 14), God's promise became a reality. Once again God had seen His people through the challenges that threatened them.

In Gethsemane, we see trust and obedience in God reflected in Jesus' prayer for God's will to be done (Luke 22:42). Our Saviour understands our struggles and is here to help us overcome!



Dig Deeper:
Recount the promises that God has given you through His Word. Declare them over your life and rest in His perfect love that drives out all fear.

Reflection: Share with God the fear in your heart. Allow Jesus to help you with this.



Dear God, when I am faced with my fears, please help me to listen, believe, and stand on Your Word. In Jesus' name, Amen.

GOD'S COMMAND

"I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth." (Genesis 9:11)

Day
20

Thursday
7 March 2024

What comes to mind when you see a rainbow? For some, it's the beauty in creation; for others, it's a reminder of God's love or a sign of hope, indicating that God is still at work. Children might even think of hidden "gold" at the foot of it.

In Genesis 6, the rainbow served as a reminder of God's covenant with Noah and all of creation. It signified that the earth would never again be destroyed by a flood, as it had recently experienced (v. 11). This promise was preceded by Noah's sacrifice, which pleased God (Genesis 8:21-22). It is comforting how God addressed the fragile state of the human heart by encouraging Noah with something as simple and beautiful as a rainbow.

Today, we have an even more powerful symbol in a new covenant that reflects God's love and commitment to His people: the Lord's Supper. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross both reflects and secures God's commitment to help and deliver us. *"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"* (Romans 8:32; NKJV).

Bible Reading:

□ Genesis 9:8-17



Dig Deeper:

How does the new covenant in Christ - which has secured eternal life for us at great cost - inspire us to live our lives wholly for Him?

Reflection: Draw a cross and place it by your bedside. Reflect on what Jesus has done for you when you feel afraid.



Father, thank You for understanding my fragile and vulnerable state. Help me to depend on Your promise to see me through life's challenges. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day
21

Friday
8 March 2024

THE MEETING POINT – OUR CRY AND GOD’S HELP

Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, And He saved them out of their distresses. He sent His word and healed them, And delivered them from their destructions. (Psalm 107:19-20; NKJV)

Bible Reading:

□ Psalm 107:1-3,
17-22

The story of humanity is one of redemption. The Bible is full of accounts of people straying from God and suffering the consequences. In their pain, they cried out, and God came to their rescue, giving them another opportunity to live out His purposes in their lives. From the patriarchs to the slaves delivered from Egypt, to the settlers in the Promised Land and the exiles; the theme of redemption runs throughout Scripture.

The Bible makes it clear it is because of who God is that we are helped. *“He is good! For His mercy endures forever”* (v. 1). Our cry for help becomes God’s meeting point of deliverance. We are assured repeatedly that God will hear our cries for help and answer us. We have hope because of the theme of redemption.



Dig Deeper:

Bring your failures and discouragement to God. Allow Him to lift you up again so that you can complete this journey of faith.

God’s ultimate redemption is demonstrated in the Lord Jesus. *“He himself bore our sins’ in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness”* (1 Peter 2:24). The commitment of God to draw us to Himself and His faithfulness in redeeming us gives us the confidence to complete the spiritual journey we have begun, even when we stumble and fall.

Reflection: Write a letter to God and tell Him about the trouble you are going through. God promises to answer.



Father, I bring my failures and struggles to You. Please help me to rise again and continue this race by Your grace. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

OUR ETERNAL HOME

"Take Aaron and Eleazar his son ... and strip Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; for Aaron shall be gathered to his people and die there." (Numbers 20:25-26; NKJV)

Day
22

Saturday
9 March 2024

The graphic and detailed account of Aaron's death brings sadness. It serves as a reminder of the reality of life on this earth. Like all good things, life must come to an end. As 1 Timothy 6:7 says, "... we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it."

Thankfully, this is not the end of the story. The Bible tells us that our journey extends far beyond this earthly life. Like Abraham, we are to live as foreigners in this world, "looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Hebrews 11:10). While we may experience many precious and valuable treasures in this world, our ultimate destiny is to be in God's presence, beholding His glory (Psalm 84:2).

Jesus was able to endure many struggles and challenges because His heart was in the right place. "For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2b). Let us, during this Lent season, look beyond ourselves to the hope that awaits us.

Bible Reading:

□ Numbers 20:22-29



Dig Deeper:

Pray for someone you know who is facing death, or heading towards eternal death because they don't know Jesus. How can you share the hope we have as Christians with this person?

Reflection: Pray and invite Jesus to walk with you. Ask Him to help you be true and obedient to Him.



Thank You, Lord, for the assurance of eternity for those who believe in Jesus. I believe. Help me to be true to Your calling, here and now. In Jesus' name, Amen.

A Lenten Hymn



BENEATH THE CROSS OF JESUS

Author: Elizabeth Cecilia Clephane, 1872; © Public Domain

Let's worship together: <https://bit.ly/lent24-sun4>

4th

**Sunday in Lent
10 March 2024**

Beneath the cross of Jesus
I fain would take my stand,
the shadow of a mighty Rock
within a weary land;
a home within the wilderness,
a rest upon the way,
from the burning of the noontide heat,
and the burden of the day.

Upon the cross of Jesus
mine eye at times can see
the very dying form of One
who suffered there for me;
and from my stricken heart with tears
two wonders I confess:
the wonders of redeeming love
and my unworthiness.

I take, O cross, thy shadow
for my abiding place;
I ask no other sunshine than
the sunshine of his face;
content to let the world go by,
to know no gain nor loss,
my sinful self my only shame,
my glory all the cross.



THE REDEEMED OF THE LORD

Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind ... (Psalm 107:8)

Day
23
Monday
11 March 2024

In this psalm, the people of the Lord recount occasions when God saved them from their troubles, likely during the time when the Judahites were exiled. Upon careful reading of today's passage, the reader will find that verse 4 is parallel to verses 9 and 10. Each starts off with God's people recounting a specific incident that caused them great distress, and then turning to God in their desperation. Both times, God responds by rescuing them. After each incident, the redeemed people of the Lord are called to thank Him for His unfailing love.

God redeeming His stubborn, rebellious people is just a foreshadowing of what He will do in the future – deliver His sinful people from eternal distress by sacrificing His Son on the cross. But how did His chosen people, the Jews respond? Far from thanking God in praise and worship as had their ancestors, many religious leaders tried to silence Jesus' disciples who were preaching the Good News that was meant to save them.

And how will you, as one of God's chosen people, respond to His ultimate act of deliverance? In your thoughts, words, and deeds, are you living the life of a redeemed person?

Bible Reading:

□ Psalm 107:1-16



Dig Deeper:

Use Psalm 107:4-9 as a framework to recount your own story with God, and thank Him for His unfailing love.

Reflection: Can you recall specific incidents in your life when God helped you in a time of trouble? Take time to thank Him for His faithful deliverance.



O Lord, my Redeemer, thank You for saving me. Help me to remember all the times that You have shown Your love for me, and teach me to live in a posture of thankfulness and praise. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Day 24

Tuesday
12 March 2024

THE HEART OF THE SERVANT

“Because you did not trust in me enough to honour me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them.” (Numbers 20:12)

Bible Reading:

□ Numbers 20:1-13



Dig Deeper:

When dealing with habitual sins you might have, which of God's commandments do you need to treat more carefully?

If this story seems familiar, a similar scenario had happened in Exodus 17. At Rephidim, God had instructed Moses to strike the rock so that water would pour out. In our passage today, note that God had instructed Moses to speak to the rock.

Moses, however, struck the rock twice and because of his transgression, both he and Aaron were banned from entering the Promised Land. This may seem unnecessarily harsh given the minor disobedience. But the text alludes to Moses' attitude – he was quick to rebuke Israel as “rebels” even though God did not refer to His people as such, and his next words “must we bring you water” reveals self-importance and superiority, as if he and Aaron were to themselves provide water for Israel, instead of the Lord.

We may never truly understand Moses' emotions during that time, but let this passage be a reminder to us, as servants of the Most High, to treat God's words and instructions carefully, and to set our hearts and attitudes right before Him.

Reflection: Small and recurring rebellious acts may be symptoms of a deeper, systemic sin of the heart. What do these rebellious acts look like for you? Take time to surrender them to the Lord.



Dear Lord, I want to honour You in my life. Help me to love You more by turning away from my sin and rebellion. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

LIGHT AND GLORY

*"... for the Lord will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your glory." (Isaiah 60:19b)*

Day
25
Wednesday
13 March 2024

Isaiah 60 is a glorious prophecy about Israel in the undefined future. When we read about all the marvellous things that will one day happen to Israel, what are some emotions you experience?

Perhaps it is indifference. We live in a time of relative comfort, but so did King Hezekiah and the congregation of Israel when this prophecy was given to them. They did not think it would actually be fulfilled in their lifetime. Yet, it was. So, let us hold steadfast to the Word of God and be on guard, for the Kingdom is at hand.

Perhaps there was some scepticism and cynicism. With increasing moral corruption and impending climate crisis in the world now, it is hard to fathom that a day of glory and righteousness will ever come. After all, how much of what we have not experienced can we understand? How does it feel like to have the Lord be our everlasting light, when the consequence of human sin envelops our daily lives?

Despite that, Isaiah's prophecy should ignite hope and gladness in us. As people of God adopted into sonship through Christ's work on the cross, we also share in the future glory of Israel!

Bible Reading:

□ Isaiah 60:15-22



Dig Deeper:

Are you discouraged in your witness for the Lord? Ask God to renew your vision, restore your hope, and grant you the assurance in the promise of future glory.

Reflection: Ask the Lord for boldness and passion, and creative ways to "let your light shine before others".



O God, instil in me fresh hope for Your future kingdom, and help me keep my eyes focused on the Light that radiates from You. In Jesus' name I ask, Amen.

Day
26
Thursday
14 March 2024

SAVED BY REPENTANCE, REST AND TRUST

"In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength ..." (Isaiah 30:15b)

Bible Reading:

□ Isaiah 30:15-18



Dig Deeper:

Make a daily commitment to take time away from your busyness to rest and be quiet before the Lord. Give Him your anxieties and align yourself to His truth and promises.

Isaiah 30 was spoken at a time when Israel was attacked by Assyrians. Their Plan A was to turn to Egypt for protection, but they did not plead or consult with God first. Alas, Egypt regarded Israel as “useless”, and did not help them.

The remedy for Israel’s transgression here is profoundly simple: Israel need not make further plans to increase military might or make new political alliances to overcome their enemies. Instead, God says that repentance and rest will save them, and their strength will come from trusting Him. And despite Israel’s waywardness, verse 18 assures them that *“the Lord longs to be gracious to you”*.

How comforting are these words! As Christians, we know that Jesus has already paved the path to victory for us through the cross. Victory does not lie in our own strength, but in trusting God. But how often do we look to Him first before charting out our own plans? In contrast to Egypt, the Lord shows us undeserved mercy and grace even though we have nothing to offer Him in return; even though we carry out our own plans and not His. Such is the loving kindness of the God we worship!

Reflection: What troubles are you currently struggling with? Ask God for a practical action plan for overcoming them.



Jesus, as I learn to align my plans with Your plans, help me to decrease so that You may increase, that others may see You in me, Amen.

SWEET INCENSE, FERVENT PRAYER

“Aaron must burn fragrant incense on the altar every morning when he tends the lamps.” (Exodus 30:7)

Day
27
Friday
15 March 2024

What is the significance of incense? Revelation 5:8 tells us that the bowls of incense represented the prayers of God’s people to Him. This passage then gives us clues about God’s design for prayer.

God instructed that the altar of incense should be placed in the Holy Place in the tabernacle, a meeting place between God and His people. The whole tabernacle would be filled with the smell of fragrant incense. Jesus Himself referred to the temple as a house of prayer. Likewise, as the body of Christ, we should be prayerful and prayer-filled people.

In verses 7 and 8, God instructs Aaron to ensure the incense will burn regularly. Likewise, we should pray without ceasing. What better way to live out our lives as new creation than to be in constant communication with the Creator Himself!

Once a year, Aaron is also instructed to take some blood of the sin offering and apply it on the horns of the altar. God’s people do not pay for their sins through prayer. Instead, through the sacrifice of animal blood, and eventually through Jesus’ blood shed on the cross, His people are able to meet with, and offer their prayers to Him!

Bible Reading:

□ Exodus 30:1-10



Dig Deeper:

How can you increase the frequency and intensity of prayer in your personal and family life? Set your intentions before God and ask Him to help you.

Reflection: Is your prayer life like that of an altar of incense? Ask God for practical ways you can make this a daily practice.



O God, thank You because You hear my prayers.
Help me to see You more clearly as I spend time in
Your presence. In Jesus’ name I ask, Amen.

Day
28
Saturday
16 March 2024

WASHED AND CLEANSED

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. (Psalm 51:10)

Bible Reading:
□ Psalm 51:1-12

Today's passage is the desperate plea King David made to God after he was rebuked by the prophet Nathan. David uses the words "wash" and "cleanse" throughout his song – actions prescribed by God to His people in the Old Testament so that they could safely enter into His presence.

David's psalm is very much ours in that we are all sinners, unworthy of God's favour. When we realise that we have sinned against God, do we treat it seriously enough and try to make things right with Him? For David, he was very much afraid that God would leave him, and take His Holy Spirit from him. We have direct access to God now through Jesus' blood washing away our sin. But if we trivialise our wrongdoings, are we then taking Jesus' death and resurrection for granted?



Dig Deeper:
Do you often heed the counsel of these "Nathan"s? Why or why not? What does that reveal about your heart?

In our sin, take heart that we can always cry out to God. Hiding our faces from Him often only leads to the persistence of sin and a worsening relationship with Him. We should also be open to godly counsel - David was driven to genuine repentance only after the prophet Nathan spoke to him, even if he already felt guilty deep inside.

Reflection: Thank God for the "prophet Nathan"s in your life who speak truth in love to you. Ask God to bring someone like that into your life if you don't have one.



Lord, You are holy and pure. Cleanliness and forgiveness come from You. Give me a pure heart and renew my spirit so that it may praise You. Amen.

A Lenten Hymn



WHEN I SURVEY THE WONDROUS CROSS

Author: Isaac Watts, 1707; © Public Domain

Let's worship together: <https://bit.ly/lent24-sun5>

5th

Sunday in Lent
17 March 2024

When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the Prince of Glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
save in the death of Christ, my God;
all the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
sorrow and love flow mingled down.
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were an offering far too small;
love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.



Day
29
Monday
18 March 2024

PATH TO PURITY

*How can a young person stay on the path of purity?
By living according to your word. (Psalm 119:9)*

Bible Reading:

□ Psalm 119:9-16

The psalm begins (verses 1-3) by describing how one can be blessed - by walking according to God's laws, keeping His commands, and earnestly seeking Him. Then in verse 9, the psalmist asks, "How can a young person stay on the path of purity?" and the answer is almost identical to the first three verses. So, how is purity and blessedness connected?

We often link being 'blessed' with material wealth - about having the 'right' things or looking the 'right' way. It is about the outside. But this passage describes being blessed as a way of life that pleases God. It is about the inside - our minds and hearts.

The path to purity is a matter of the heart. A person who is pure is genuine, authentic, trustworthy ... and in the Lord's eyes, holy. Staying on the path of purity sets you apart from the world. You live according to God's Word and are therefore blessed. To be blessed is to have godly peace and utter confidence in the sovereignty of God in your life. This is especially evident in Christ's sacrifice on the cross to save us from eternal punishment that we might be with Him in heaven one day.

Reference: <https://drjustinimelsr.com/sermon-on-the-psalms-how-to-clean-up-our-lives-psalm-119-11/>



Dig Deeper:

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you if there are aspects in your life that need to be brought back to the path of purity.

Reflection: Think about God's blessings in your life. How many of them are external and material things? What would your list look like without them?



Dear Lord, teach me to live every day in obedience to Your Word so that I can stay on the path of purity. I ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

PRAISE AND REJOICE

I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches. (Psalm 119:14)

Day
30
Tuesday
19 March 2024

From a path of purity, we now come to the psalmist's posture of praise. We see that the path of purity leads to celebration. How is that even possible?

In a world that overvalues freedom of expression and independence, we may sometimes feel that godly purity is boring, limiting, and outdated. Why choose to obey an ancient book over what is trending in society?

Professional athletes understand the value of this truth - discipline leads to freedom. If they consistently choose the path of purity and discipline in their sport, they will develop the strength that leads to success, and freedom to live life as they truly desire.

This is why the psalmist celebrates the privilege and honour of learning from the Lord. Instead of using his lips to complain, compare, or boast, he chooses to talk about what God wants over what he wants.

As he experiences blessings from living a God-centred life, he celebrates with as much joy as one who is super rich. Imagine being so close to God that following the truth and His teachings become more important and exciting than great wealth!

Bible Reading:

□ Psalm 119:9-16



Dig Deeper:

What excites you in your journey of faith? Give thanks to God for that and consider how the Lord may use this to inspire others.

Reflection: Prayerfully ask God to show you how to be more intentional in obeying His laws. Make a list and commit to work on it.



Dear Lord, teach me to live a life that constantly reflects Your goodness and celebrates it. May I draw others to You through the joy I find in You. Amen.

Day
31
Wednesday
20 March 2024

PRECEPTS AND PRESENCE

*I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.
I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.
(Psalm 119:15-16)*

Bible Reading:

□ Psalm 119:9-16

What do we spend time thinking about more than God's truth? It could be our work, worries, wishes, relationships, and much more. What we focus and think deeply about ultimately influences our habits, decisions, and lifestyles. It becomes the path we take. If I'm focused on my fear of not having enough, then I will choose the way of chasing money over God. If I focus on my fear of losing my friends, I may likely choose pleasing my friends over God.



Dig Deeper:

Take a moment to listen to what the Holy Spirit could be saying to you. Write it down and reflect on it.

Because the psalmist focuses on God's truths and ways, he **delights** in God's laws. Why? Because he knows that God's ways are better, wiser, and will lead him to the best life possible. The Bible tells us that God delights in His children, and this is why He sent His only Son to die on the cross for our sins. His grace reached out to us even when we didn't deserve it, and saved us when we couldn't save ourselves. May we recognise what He has done for us, and respond with gratitude in our hearts and obedience to His Word.

*Reflection: Have you been delighting more in worldly things than in God?
What is something the Lord could be leading you to surrender to Him?*



Dear God, sometimes surrender is difficult. Give me the strength to do what is right. I want to honour and obey You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

GOD IS PERFECTLY GOOD

*Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever. (Psalm 118:1)*

Day
32
Thursday
21 March 2024

What does 'good' mean? When we say that God is good, it means that He is always, forever, and perfectly good. In our human experience, we have different levels of 'good'. Often, 'good' has come to mean okay or average, and then we have *really good, super fantastic, unbelievably amazing!* But when the Bible says that God is good, it means that **God is perfect**. In our broken, fallen world, there is nothing truly or perfectly good, except God! There is nothing on earth that compares to how good God is. Think about it. Anything good that we experience on earth does not last - good food will rot, good holidays will be forgotten, good cars will eventually break down, etc.

God is perfectly and eternally good, and so, His love endures forever. His love will not falter, forget, or fail. His love will outlast and outlive creation because He is our everlasting God. When Jesus died on the cross for us, His sacrifice confirmed and sealed eternal salvation for those who choose to believe in Him. There is no deed so devilish, no sin so serious, and no past so painful that it can separate us from the love of God.

Bible Reading:

□ Psalm 118



Dig Deeper:

Sometimes, it is easier to believe that God is good to others who seem more "holy" than us. That is simply not true. He is a loving Father to all His children. Ask Him to reveal His Father heart to you.

Reflection: Do you truly believe God is good... to you?



Dear Heavenly Father, please show me and help me understand Your unconditional love for me. I want to know You better and learn to love You more. Amen.

Day
33

Friday
22 March 2024

THE CORNERSTONE'S SIGNIFICANCE

*The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;
the Lord has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes.
(Psalm 118:22-23)*

Bible Reading:

□ Psalm 118

Verses 22-24 remind us to marvel at how God overturned what was to be rejected and forgotten to become the cornerstone; that is, the first stone laid that becomes the reference point for all other stones to be laid after it. By right, the builders with their expertise should have been able to recognise and select a suitable cornerstone, but they could not. Because God saw deeper than what others could, He restored the stone that was supposed to be rejected and meaningless and gave it significance. It then became the very reason all other stones found their meaning!



Dig Deeper:

*Who can you
be accountable
to about this
commitment to
change? May the
Lord grant you
patience, strength,
and wisdom to obey
and please Him.*

This is also what He did through the cross. The Pharisees and religious teachers should have recognised Christ as the Messiah, but they were blinded by their pride. Through His selfless sacrifice on the cross, God raised Him up to be the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Talk about the ultimate plot twist – from being vilified to being glorified.

Turn to Jesus today. Make Him the cornerstone in your life and He will turn your life around for the better. Would you surrender to Him and give Him thanks, so that He will become your salvation (verse 21)?

Reflection: What might be one negative habit you need to replace with a godly one, in order to place Jesus as the cornerstone in your life?



Dear Jesus, teach me to have You as the cornerstone in my life. May everything I do come from a place of surrender to the Father's will and ways. Amen.

ADMIRE AND LIFT HIGH

*You are my God, and I will praise you; you are my God,
and I will exalt you. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever. (Psalm 118:28-29)*

Day
34

Saturday
23 March 2024

How big is God in your life? Or is something else a bigger priority right now?

Bible Reading:

☐ Psalm 118

When the psalmist declares, “*You are my God, and I will praise you*”, he is expressing admiration and awe for God. What we praise or criticise has a place of priority. If we keep a critical spirit towards our spouse or sibling and constantly complain about them instead of thanking and praising God for them, that critical spirit has taken priority, and true praise to God cannot coexist with a critical spirit.



When the psalmist sings, “*You are my God, and I will exalt you*”, he is lifting up the Lord to a place of utmost importance in his life. He knows that God is good. The goodness of God to us is not dependent on our goodness to Him. The only reason we can be of any good or do any good is due to His grace and goodness. It all comes from Him! In times of plenty or lack, sickness or health, God remains good. His goodness stems from His eternal love for us. We love because He loved us first, and the cross of Jesus Christ is proof of it!

Dig Deeper:

Write a list of praise points to God no matter what you are going through. Use verse 28 as the anchor and pray, “You are my God, I will praise You. I praise You for _____.”

Reflection: Is there anyone you tend to be critical towards? Bring it to the Lord.



Thank You, Lord, for Your goodness and grace in my life.
Please teach me to have a heart of continuous praise to You. Amen.

A Lenten Hymn



THE DAY OF RESURRECTION

*Author: John of Damascus; Translator: J. M. Neale, 1862;
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Let's worship together: <https://bit.ly/lent24-sun6>



**Palm Sunday
24 March 2024**

The day of resurrection!
Earth, tell it out abroad;
the passover of gladness,
the passover of God.
From death to life eternal,
from earth unto the sky,
our Christ hath brought us over,
with hymns of victory.

Our hearts be pure from evil,
that we may see aright
the Lord in rays eternal
of resurrection light;
and listening to his accents,
may hear, so calm and plain,
his own "All hail!" and, hearing,
may raise the victor strain.

Now let the heavens be joyful!
Let earth the song begin!
Let the round world keep triumph,
and all that is therein!
Let all things seen and unseen
their notes in gladness blend,
for Christ the Lord hath risen,
our joy that hath no end.



IN GOD WE FIND LIFE

*For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.
(Psalm 36:9)*

Day
35
Monday
25 March 2024

Life is not easy. People from all walks of life face challenges. Students have exams and friendship stresses; adults have work and financial stresses. And that doesn't even come close to describing the full picture. Many people try their hardest to meet their needs. Young people put in effort to be accepted, to have meaningful friendships. Adults work very hard to earn a living, so that the family is well provided for. But it doesn't always work according to plan.

Thankfully, our needs are **fully met** when we **come to God**:

Safe space (refuge) for those who are afraid;
food on the table for those hungry; and
fulfillment in life for those seeking purpose.

The psalmist uses the word "fountain" to help us understand that in this life we are not meant to just survive, but to thrive in God's goodness. If you are struggling in life, look to Jesus for refuge, for provision and a thriving life, filled with hope. Why would He do all this for you? Because He loves you and gave His life for you, and because of Him, the fountain of life is yours.

Bible Reading:

□ Psalm 36:5-11



Dig Deeper:

Recall a time when God answered your prayer for a need in your life. Take a moment to reaffirm God's love and faithfulness over your life.

Reflection: What struggle(s) do you have now? Tell Jesus in prayer and trust Him to meet your needs.



Lord Jesus, I commit to You [name your struggle].
I choose to trust You because Your love never fails.
My hope is in You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Day
36
Tuesday
26 March 2024

BE MY ROCK OF REFUGE

*Be my rock of refuge, to which I can always go; give the command to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress.
(Psalm 71:3)*

Bible Reading:
□ Psalm 71:1-14



Dig Deeper:

Is there someone you can be accountable to and share your struggles with so they can pray for you? Ask God for someone if you don't.

Difficulties in life are usually caused by people or situations. It could be a disagreement with a friend, or an upcoming exam; an argument with a spouse, or difficulty meeting work targets; or anything else under the sun. When that happens, we may want to go to a safe place for protection, for a solution, for comfort. A place to rest and be protected from our troubles – like a fortress!

Psalm 71 tells us that God is reliable and safe, and we can go to Him to find rest and protection. Like standing on a solid rock instead of quicksand. But God is a person and not a place. So, how do we go to Him? That's the best part – we 'go' to Him anytime we pray. When we pray, He makes our place of prayer our fortress and refuge.

God understands our struggles because Jesus struggled like us when He lived on earth. And Jesus Himself often went to His Father in prayer as He made His journey to the cross. He found strength and ultimately triumphed! And now thanks to Jesus, we can also find strength and victory in our struggles. Just go to Him in prayer anytime, anywhere.

Reflection: Remember the struggle you named yesterday? Will you trust Jesus to be your fortress for that struggle ... and all other struggles?



Lord Jesus, I commit to You [name your struggle(s)]. Please be my refuge, please save me, O Lord. You are my rock and my fortress. Amen.

LORD, HELP!

*Hasten, O God, to save me; come quickly, Lord, to help me.
(Psalm 70:1)*

Day
37
Wednesday
27 March 2024

Asking God for help is not a sign of weakness. In fact, it should be the first thing a Christian does in any kind of trouble. Anyone else would see this as a weakness, the last resort, or being downright irresponsible. But think about this: If you are a student being treated unfairly at school, wouldn't you tell your parents? If your colleague does not cooperate and is jeopardising the project, wouldn't you tell your boss?

Before Jesus came, we were alone and had no one to turn to. But when Jesus came and died on the cross, He made everyone who believes in Him part of His family. That means the heavenly Father became our Father. So, when this world gives you trouble, why wouldn't you go to your Father in heaven who loves you and rules the universe?

It would be wise to learn from King David, who despite being a king, would go to God as his first step towards problem solving. It is not a sign of weakness, but of wisdom. He was drawing on a higher power to overcome trouble. Are you in any trouble? Ask God for help. You will be glad you did.

Bible Reading:

□ Psalm 70



Dig Deeper:

Take time to remember and thank God for His help in the past and commit to grow in your trust and dependence on Him.

Reflection: What stops you from asking God for help when in trouble? Ask Him to teach you to trust and depend on Him for help.



Lord, whenever I am in trouble, teach me to be wise, humble, and willing to come to You for help and protection. Amen.

Day
38
Maundy Thursday
28 March 2024

GOD LISTENS TO YOU

I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live. (Psalm 116:1-2)

Bible Reading:

☐ Psalm 116:1-2,
12-19



Dig Deeper:

Find a private space where you can pray quietly and with a sincere heart tell God you love Him. Be still and wait for His response. What did He say?

Sometimes we may wonder if God hears our prayers. If He does, maybe it is in a passive way like how we hear the sound of traffic or some ambient noise. But that is not true. The Bible assures us that God bends down to listen to our unique, individual voice (NLT). So, when we pray especially for help, He is bending down, giving us attention as a loving Father, and listening to what we have to say even though He already knows what we are about to say. He does this because He loves us. Prayer is not a ritual, nor a way to gain points with God. It is a way to have a relationship with Him. It is communication with the One who loves us through Jesus. That's why we end our prayers with, "In Jesus' name".

So don't feel "paiseh" (shy) about praying when you need His help. You can also say, 'Hi' to Him and invite Him to be with you in your routine. Just stop for a moment to speak to Him.

Tip: You don't have to close your eyes and put your hands together. Just end your prayer with, "In Jesus' name, Amen".

Reflection: How would you imagine God listening to you pray? How does reading Psalm 116:1-2 change the way you understand Him?



Lord Jesus, thank You for always listening to me and caring for me whenever I turn to You in prayer. Help me understand Your love in a deeper way. Amen.

YOU WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED

To you they cried out and were saved; in you they trusted and were not put to shame. (Psalm 22:5)

Day
39
Good Friday
29 March 2024

Sometimes we pray, but nothing happens. It is not because God sees us as unworthy but because He looks at the bigger picture when addressing our problem, and He wants to solve it once and for all. Every problem in life starts with the sin in our hearts and in the hearts of others. Sin demands a penalty, which is death. But God loves us too much to leave us as we are. So, He sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, who lived a perfect, sinless life, to die on the cross in our place, paying our penalty so that we don't have to pay it. But His work is not done yet. It is only completed when Jesus comes again to make everything new.

We currently live between those two key points in time. While we still face problems in life and are waiting for Jesus to return, **hang on to hope in Jesus** that the work He began on the cross will be perfected when He comes again. His timing is always perfect, and He cares for you. **Let Him decide the best time to answer** your prayer. He will not disappoint you for trusting in Him.

Bible Reading:

□ Psalm 22



Dig Deeper:

Ask the Lord for patience and trust in His perfect timing for solving your problem.

Reflection: Will you trust God with your current worry, even though it seems like there is no solution?



Lord Jesus, it is scary to trust You and not have a back-up plan. Please help me understand You are trustworthy, and so back-up plans are not necessary. Amen.

Day
40
Holy Saturday
30 March 2024

WAITING FOR RESCUE

Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me. Keep me free from the trap that is set for me, for you are my refuge. (Psalm 31:3-4)

Bible Reading:

□ Psalm 31:1-4,
15-16



Dig Deeper:

Ask God to reveal areas in your life you find difficult to entrust to Him. Ask for His forgiveness and invite Him to guide you through His Word.

Though we may know that God loves us, protects us, and is trustworthy, it doesn't stop us from being impatient. That's understandable because no one wants to stay in trouble any longer than they have to!

While waiting for God to rescue us, in our impatience, we often do things to try and solve our problems; but more often than not, we make it worse. This time of waiting is when we need to be the most patient in waiting for God's guidance - for the evil one is waiting for us to fall into the trap that he has set for us.

Jesus Himself set us the example of patiently enduring the cross and ignoring the shame, for the sake of the glory, joy, and victory at the end of the journey. So, if we really want to do something, the best thing to do is to ask for His help in prayer and wait patiently. God will answer in His perfect timing. Not ours. There will be more troubles in the future because this world is not perfect. Trust Him, and you will see how faithful and amazing He is as time goes by!

Reflection: Will you trust God with your exams? Future? Relationships?



Lord Jesus, thank You for Your love for me. Teach me to trust You in both good and bad times. Help me know that You are real and personal. Amen.

A Lenten Hymn



CHRIST THE LORD IS RISEN TODAY

Author: Charles Wesley, 1739; © Public Domain

Let's worship together: <https://bit.ly/lent24-sun7>



Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!
Earth and heaven in chorus say, Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!

Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!
Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!
Death in vain forbids him rise, Alleluia!
Christ has opened paradise, Alleluia!

Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!
Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia!
Once he died our souls to save, Alleluia!
Where's thy victory, boasting grave? Alleluia!

Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia!
Following our exalted Head, Alleluia!
Made like him, like him we rise, Alleluia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!

Hail the Lord of earth and heaven, Alleluia!
Praise to thee by both be given, Alleluia!
Thee we greet triumphant now, Alleluia!
Hail the Resurrection, thou, Alleluia!

King of glory, soul of bliss, Alleluia!
Everlasting life is this, Alleluia!
Thee to know, thy power to prove, Alleluia!
Thus to sing, and thus to love, Alleluia!



Contributors

The TRAC Board of Worship and Music would like to thank all our contributors for their prayerful involvement in this year's Lent Meditations.

Angeline Seow (Editor) and her husband, Peter, are members of Canning Garden Methodist Church, and serve with Wycliffe Malaysia in Papua, Indonesia. They have three adult children, David, Daryl and Hannah. Besides the ministry of Bible translation, the Seows are passionate about drawing people closer to the Lord through the worship and music ministry. Ideally, if it were possible, Angie would love to live solely on coffee and dark chocolate. She has an MA in Biblical Studies, and is currently a senior translation consultant with SIL International and serves on the SIL Journal of Translation editorial board. She is also the SIL Asia Bible Translation Coordination Team facilitator and the SIL International Coordinator for Research and Practice.

Celine Choong attends Whispering Hope Methodist Church where she is active in the cell group and praise and worship ministries. She also contributes to youth camps such as YLDP and YouthQuake. This year she completed a pilgrimage to the Camino de Santiago. She is blissfully married to Wen Shan and they enjoy walking their dogs and climbing rocks together.

Rev. Christopher Rao is currently the pastor in charge of Wesley Methodist Church, Kuantan. He has a BTh and MMin from Seminari Theoloji Malaysia. He is also currently the Chairman of the Board of Evangelism. He enjoys quiet personal retreats and the ministry of the Word. He is married to Rhema and is blessed with two children, Yohanen and Rania.

Rev. Gaurri Maniam is the pastor of Wesley Methodist Church, Klang, and serves on the TRAC Board of Christian Education. She enjoys having spiritual conversations among friends about what God is doing in our hearts. She is passionate about helping people draw near to God through prayer.

Gina Yap Lai Yoong (Layout & Design) is a marketing communications specialist with the skills to execute the campaigns she strategizes for. Her capabilities to write and design ensure that a page is curated to present the complete message to its readers with an attractive, easy readability impact. She is passionate about books and publications, poring over pages to understand its wonders. Find out more about her at www.ginayaplaiyoong.com or simply get connected on social media (/ginayaplaiyoong).

Jane Ng was born and raised in Petaling Jaya until she got married and moved to Penang in 2006. She is passionate about worship, music and inter-weaving of Scripture Responses in liturgy to draw people into God's presence. She is an Advocate & Solicitor by profession with a keen sense of justice for the oppressed. Coffee and crisps are her antidote for stress. She is blissfully married to Daniel Khoo and they have two wonderful children, Isaac and Faith.

Jane Tan is married to a pastor and enjoys her role as a pastor's wife. She has always been interested in the worship and creative & performing arts ministries, and is thankful to God that she has been able to be involved in these ministries in the churches where they have served. She is also passionate about discipleship, especially the discipling of the next generation.

Rev. Jonathan Chan is passionate to see people of all walks of life come to know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour; and draw close to Him. He had served the Lord in youth ministry and small group ministry in Wesley Methodist Church, Kuala Lumpur before being called to pastoral ministry. His current appointment is with Wesley Methodist Church, Taiping. He is married to Sook Jing and they have two boys: Josh, seven years old and Jeremy, three years old.

Rosaleen Goh is married to Terry Yeow and together, they have three young children. Family life is lovely, busy, and just a little bit crazy (in a good way). Growing up in a Christian family, Rosaleen first encountered God in a very personal way when He set her free from fear of death at the age of four. In her work, Rosaleen greatly values opportunities to journey with people toward self-discovery, growth and a life-changing encounter with Jesus.





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