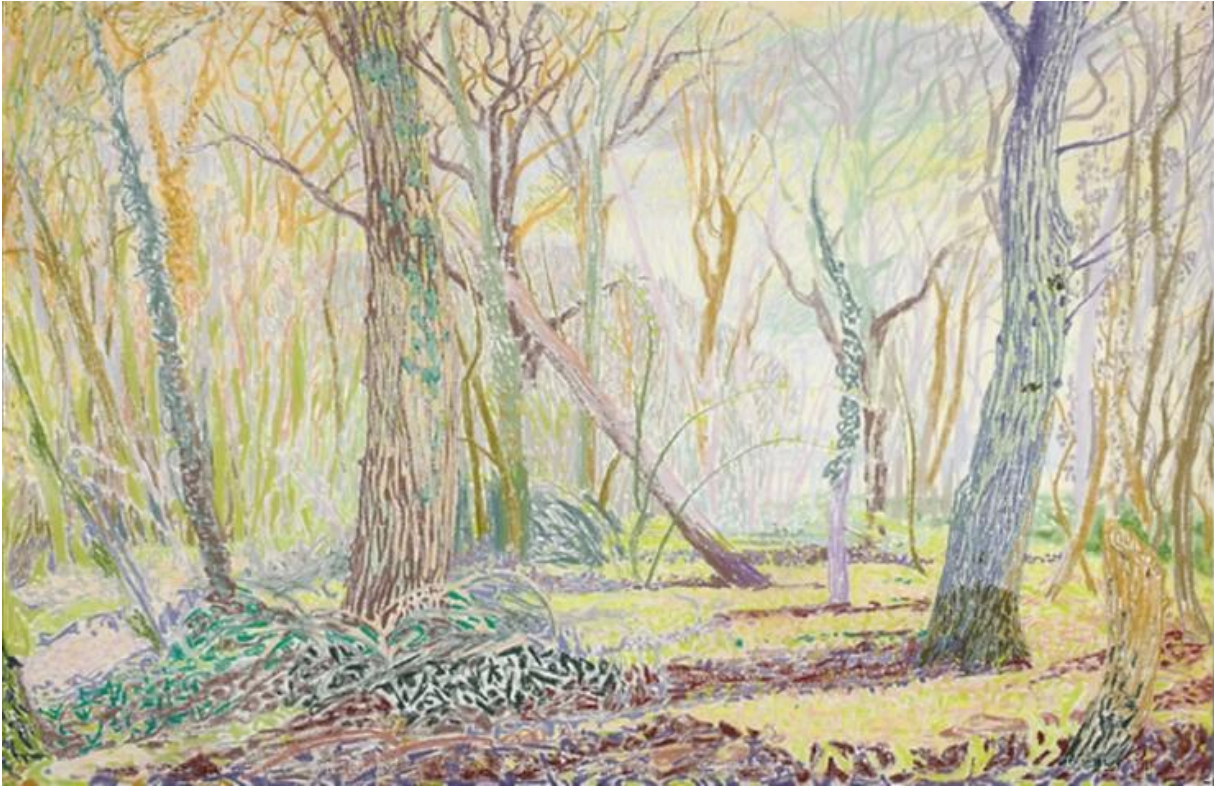


Hebrews



Easter Saturday, by Mark Cazalet

Lent & Easter 2026

Rose Hill Church

Week 1

Introductions



Christ in the Storm on the Sea of Galilee by Rembrandt

Sunday, Week 1, Day 1

Welcome to the Rose Hill devotional for Lent and Easter in 2026!

In this devotional, you'll find many ways to draw near to Jesus. Most days should take about 5 minutes to complete, with a few offering a longer time. This is a tool for you, and everything in it is an invitation, not an obligation – if you miss a day here or there, just jump in wherever works best.

Each week has a general rhythm to it:

Sundays give space for sermon notes or reflections, as well as gratitude for how God has met you in the previous week. Consider bringing this devotional to worship with you.

Mondays have a Psalm and a tool called The Weekly Forecast, which will prompt you to think prayerfully about the week ahead.

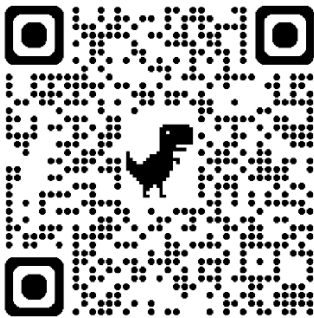
Tuesdays will usually be a Scripture and reflection to go along with the theme for the week.

Wednesdays introduce a variety of prayer practices. These may be new to you; give them a try and maybe you'll find a new favorite!

Thursdays return to Scripture and reflections.

Fridays usually take a little longer, meditating on Scripture with a practice called Lectio Divina.

Saturdays offer a song and reflection. You can find a **Spotify playlist with all the songs** (plus many bonus songs!) **here**:



If you are the kind of person who enjoys interacting with a book physically, go for it – write all over, underline, highlight, or doodle away.

We'll start today with a simple prayer to dedicate the time:

Father, Son, Holy Spirit, as we start on this 10 week journey of coming to you through your Word, through prayers, and through reflection, be with us. May this discipline “[produce] a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. ... Strengthen [our] feeble arms and weak knees.¹³ “Make level paths for [our] feet,” so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.” (Hebrews 12:12-13). In all things, to you be the glory, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Monday, Week 1, Day 2

The season of Lent developed in the Church as a season of repentance and fasting leading up to Easter. Historically, it has been a time for those new to the faith to prepare for baptism, for those who wanted to return to church to reconcile and receive forgiveness, and for the faithful to remember the grace and mercy of the Lord.

Mark 1:14-15

14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

When Jesus started talking about what it means to live in the Kingdom of God, his two central messages of good news were: repent and believe. Repentance might not sound like good news. It might sound heavy and somber. But repentance is simply turning away from the things that distance us from Jesus and turning back toward Him.

This is the normal pattern of faith – we notice where we have wandered away and we come back home again. We repent and believe. We start fresh. The mercy of the Lord is new every morning, and boy, do we need it.

Lent lasts for 7 weeks: 40 days of repentance, with each Sunday as a “mini-Easter” to rejoice in what God has done on our behalf.* Even here we see the rhythm of faith – repent and believe. We are always reminded that there is victory over the things that weigh us down. Resurrection is coming. The old is gone, the new has come. This is good news!

Lent is a time to notice how our lives are really doing and take steps toward Jesus.

You can think of it as spring cleaning for the soul. Maybe in your house you have that one counter (or two) – the one (or three) that tends to collect junk, and suddenly the piles of things to sort through have gotten out of control. This happens inside our souls too.

Take some time today to slow down and reflect.

How is it with your soul? Are there things about your life that feel heavy or weary? Anything that has piled up and needs to be addressed? Any ways you have wandered or lost sight of Jesus?

Bring these things to the Father in prayer. If journaling is helpful for you, use the space below.

*Alternatively, some traditions do not take a break on Sundays. Instead, they count the 40 days of Lent from Ash Wednesday until Palm Sunday, with the week leading up until Easter (Holy Week) as its own extra-intensive week of preparation, usually with a full fast from all food on Good Friday and/or Holy Saturday.

Tuesday, Week 1, Day 3 (Mardi Gras)

Today, our focus is on making a plan for Lent.

One of the ways to observe Lent is to take on a spiritual practice or discipline. The practices of our faith are based on what we see Jesus doing in the Gospels, and fall into two general categories:

Practices of emptying/abstinence: solitude & silence, fasting, generosity, rest, etc. These are most helpful when we are struggling to stop living in a way we don't want to live.

Practices of filling/engagement: prayer, community, service, scripture, witness, etc. These are most helpful when we want to start living in a new way.

Yesterday, you spent some time taking an honest look at how you are doing.

The practices are here to help us draw closer to God. For every way you have wandered, the practices offer a way back. Think of them as tools to clear a path to get to Jesus. He's the one that sets us right.

If you have been tired, distracted or overburdened, a practice of emptying might be in order. Maybe rest from social media or your phone. Maybe go to bed at a certain time every day. Maybe two minutes of quiet at the start of the day. Maybe setting aside something that you have been going to for comfort for the duration of Lent.

If you have been feeling lonely, empty, or apathetic, a practice of filling might be in order. Maybe sending a text to someone in your community every day. Maybe following a morning or evening routine of prayer and Scripture. Maybe a commitment to be of service to your household by doing the dishes daily.

If this all feels like a lot, simply committing to coming to this devotional every day is a great place to start. It has Scripture and prayer covered already!

Advice: Start small & where you are. You don't need to overhaul your entire life. Just pick one thing. What might you need in this season?

Write down your plan:

Ash Wednesday, Week 1, Day 4

Rose Hill Church Community Meal (6 pm) and

Ash Wednesday Service (7 pm)

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return”

Ash Wednesday marks the official start of Lent. In the special worship service on this day, ashes are placed on our forehead in the shape of a cross. Traditionally, these ashes are from the palms of the previous year’s Palm Sunday service. They remind us of where we come from and where we are going.

Lent begins with an invitation to take faith in Jesus seriously – to remember that we only have one life to live.

Consider starting Lent with this prayer of confession (from the Book of Common Prayer):

We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.
Have mercy on us, Lord.

We have been deaf to your call to serve, as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.
Have mercy on us, Lord.

We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of our lives,
We confess to you, Lord.

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,
We confess to you, Lord.

Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,
We confess to you, Lord.

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work,
We confess to you, Lord.

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,
We confess to you, Lord.

Accept our repentance, Lord, for the wrongs we have done: for our blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,
Accept our repentance, Lord.

For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,
Accept our repentance, Lord.

For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us,
Accept our repentance, Lord.

Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us;
Favorably hear us, for your mercy is great.

Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,
That we may show forth your glory in the world.

By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,
Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

Amen

Thursday, Week 1, Day 5

Introducing the book of Hebrews

Throughout Lent and into the first three weeks of Easter, we will be looking at the book of Hebrews together. This is a rich book, full of references, allusions, and quotations from the Old Testament. The author and audience of the book are unknown. What we do know from different portions of Hebrews is that the recipients of the letter had a Jewish background and were facing persecution.

The author of Hebrews has two main goals:

First, Hebrews shows that Jesus is greater than all else. Jesus is compared to angels, Moses, the priests, the covenant, and the sacrifices. In all cases, Jesus outstrips all comparison. He is worthy of our total faith and commitment.

Second, Hebrews encourages its readers to stay true to Jesus no matter their circumstances. They faced very real opposition because of their belief in Jesus. The temptation was to take the easy route and drift away. They are reminded that they are not alone – a great cloud of witnesses offers encouragement to stand firm.

“Given all that has been said about Jesus, that he is God’s very word ([Heb. 1-2](#)) and offers hope for new creation ([Heb. 3-4](#)), that he is an eternal priest ([Heb. 5-7](#)) and the perfect sacrifice ([Heb. 8-10](#)), it only makes sense that we should follow all the great models of faith found within the story of the Scriptures ([Heb. 11](#)) by remaining faithful to Jesus. The author urges these suffering Christians to trust that, despite hardship and persecution, God will not abandon his people ([Heb. 12-13](#)).” (The Bible Project, [Book of Hebrews | Guide with Key Information and Resources](#))

For a more detailed summary of Hebrews, follow the link in the QR code to a great summary video from The Bible Project.



Friday, Week 1, Day 6

Hebrews 2:1-4

We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. ²For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, ³how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. ⁴God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

3:12-14

See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. ¹⁴We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ. We have been given the best gift ever at the time of our salvation. The gift of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The help of the Holy Spirit is so crucial in our lives. Confirming in our hearts and minds the work that God has and is doing for us. Reminding us of the correct path to walk with Him. Hiding his promises and laws in our hearts. God shows us all the time the miracles He has done in the past, is doing and will do for us. Looking at His creation reminds us daily how He cares for us. Providing and meeting our needs is a constant reminder.

We need to be available to help one another. Be sure that our hearts are not reflecting on evil or turning away from God. Be accountable to your brothers and sisters in Christ. If you see someone going down the wrong path, love them enough to warn them and help them get back on the right path. When we are faithful to the end, trusting God, we will share in all that belongs to Christ.

Who have you helped along their journey? Who has helped you? Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you in all things.

Reflection by Sandy Adair

Saturday, Week 1, Day 7

[He Will Hold Me Fast](#) by Keith & Kristyn Getty

When I fear my faith will fail
Christ will hold me fast
When the tempter would prevail
He will hold me fast

I could never keep my hold
Through life's fearful path
For my love is often cold
He must hold me fast

Chorus: He will hold me fast
He will hold me fast
For my Savior loves me so
He will hold me fast

Those He saves are His delight
Christ will hold me fast
Precious in His holy sight
He will hold me fast

He'll not let my soul be lost
His promises shall last
Bought by Him at such a cost
He will hold me fast

Chorus

For my life He bled and died
Christ will hold me fast
Justice has been satisfied
He will hold me fast

Raised with Him to endless life
He will hold me fast
Till our faith is turned to sight
When he comes at last

Chorus

As the storm quickly approached the wooden sailing vessel sailors called to each other, “Hold fast! Hold fast!” They all knew the meaning – and significance – of the command. Find something sturdy on deck, grab it and don’t let go, lest you are swept overboard! To hold fast meant not only to act quickly, but to hold on tightly – steadfastly. Essential advice. But what if the rigging they grasped broke? Or they became too tired and lost their grip? What if a gust of wind or mighty wave ripped them – and their support – off the deck?

Life can seem like one storm after another. Broken relationships, financial concerns, illness, the loss of a loved one, and the list goes on. How can one “hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering...” (Heb. 10:23a) when they fear their faith will fail, the tempter will prevail, that they may lose their hold or when their love is often cold?

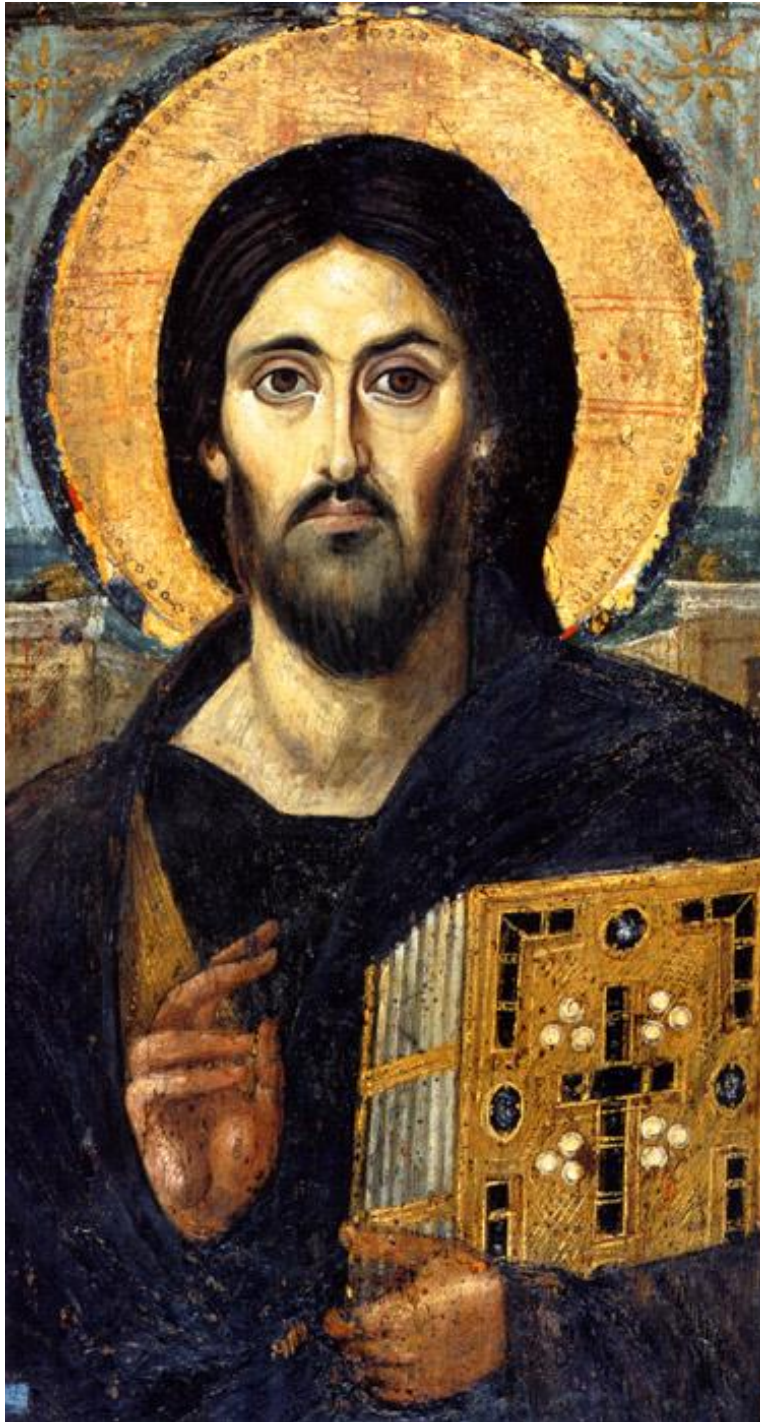
How? “..., for he who promised is faithful” (Heb 10:23b). That’s a big deal: we are not holding fast onto part of a fragile boat, but onto Christ – who is always faithful, who bled and died for you and me, who delights in those He saves. Moreover, we are not the only ones holding on. Christ is holding you in his strong embrace. And he won’t let go!

Take a few moments to meditate on the lyrics of today’s song. Contemplate how Christ holds you fast. What does that look like? What does it feel like?

Reflection by Elaine Weltz

Week 2

Jesus is the Final Word



Christ Pantokrator (“ruler of all”), St. Cathrine’s Monastery, Mt. Sinai

**note: Jesus’ face is meant to portray both his human nature (left side) and divine nature (right side)*

Sunday, Week 2, Day 1

Hebrews 1:1-4,

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. ³The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. ⁴So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

Sermon Notes & Reflections

Gratitude

List at least 5 things from the previous week for which you are grateful.

Monday, Week 2, Day 2

Weekly forecast: this is a time to take stock and prepare yourself for the week ahead.

Check in: How is it with your soul? What are you finding challenging or encouraging about your Lenten practice?

Looking ahead to the week: what is coming up this week? Anything you are looking forward to? Anything you are wary of?

Watch out for... (what potential challenges are ahead?)

Hold onto... (what will help when facing those challenges)

Spend time in prayer about the week ahead. Consider using the words of the Psalm in your prayer.

Psalm 2

¹ Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?

² The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying,

³ "Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles."

⁴ The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.

⁵ He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,

⁶ "I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain."

⁷ I will proclaim the Lord's decree: He said to me, "You are my son; today I have become your father.

⁸ Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.

⁹ You will break them with a rod of iron; you will dash them to pieces like pottery."

¹⁰ Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.

¹¹ Serve the Lord with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling.

¹² Kiss his son, or he will be angry and your way will lead to your destruction, for his wrath can flare up in a moment.

Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Tuesday, Week 2, Day 3

Hebrews 1:1-2

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.

Reflection

What are the voices calling for your attention right now?

Where have you heard God speaking in the past?

What are you hoping to hear from Jesus in this season?

Wednesday, Week 2, Day 4

Prayer Practice: Lectio Divina is an ancient way to meditate on Scripture. It offers a way to enter into the Word slowly and prayerfully. It takes a little more time, but can tune our ears to hear God speaking.

We'll have the chance to practice using this tool each week. Set aside at least 15-20 minutes. You'll be reading the same passage multiple times, each time paying attention to the Word in a different way. It might be helpful to grab something to write with: underline, circle, write, or doodle as you respond.

There are 5 movements to Lectio Divina: Be still, read, meditate, pray, and contemplate.

Hebrews 1:1-4

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. ³The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. ⁴So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

Be Still

Take a deep breath or two. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak through the Scripture.

Read

What does the Scripture say? Slowly read the verses, looking for details, key words, and concepts.

Meditate

Read the passage again. Imagine yourself in the passage: what do you experience, think or feel? What catches your attention? Mentally "chew" on the words and images.

Pray

Read again! How does this connect with your life? Talk with God about the issues that come up. What comforts you? What challenges you? How might God be inviting you to respond?

Contemplate

Read one more time. Savor being in God's presence. Sit with Him and allow Him to search your heart. You may find that words come to mind, but maybe you just want to be quiet. Take as much time as you need.

Thursday, Week 2, Day 5

Colossians 1:13-20

¹³For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

¹⁵The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

When I was 15 years old I came to a mental and moral crisis. My family attended church most Sundays. I found that I had no trouble with trusting that God created all things. Evolution was interesting to explain many things, but I totally believed that God started it all and set all the boundaries (natural laws) to sustain all created matter. I had no issues with Jesus of Nazareth dying for my sins and being my Savior.

However, at 15 I was faced with whether I accepted Jesus as **Lord** of my life. I struggled with that for a time before surrendering in obedience to Jesus Christ as **LORD of me**. In the passage above I have no struggle with any of it except the words "...that in everything Jesus might be pre-eminent." I find myself groaning at this even after 50 years of 'letting Jesus have his way in my life'.

O God, may you yet have the victory over my 'unwillingness' to let you be the '**boss of me**'. May your mercy and grace to each of us be new every morning as promised time and again in Scripture.
AMEN

Reflection by Kurt Thompson

Friday, Week 2, Day 6

John 1:1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

Jesus was a fisherman from Galilee who left with his brother James to follow Jesus and become “fishers of men” (Matt 4:18-22). John walked with Jesus as one of his disciples, learning His ways. He wrote the Gospel of John to spread the Word so that we may believe that “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:30-31). John was a faithful servant and dedicated follower of Christ.

In John 1:1-5, John uses a similar phrase from the beginning of the bible, Genesis, “In the beginning.....” Jesus was with God in the beginning. This is a concept that at times is hard for me to completely understand. Jesus as distinct yet one with God. Jesus left heaven to come down to earth. Another concept that is so hard to fathom, leaving heaven to save me (us). His words and deeds brought life and light into our dark, sinful world and brought salvation to those who believe. What an amazing sacrifice. Praise be to God!

Because Jesus came down to earth, “The light shines in the darkness and darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:5). Let’s look towards the promises and truth of God, through study, action and praise. How is your light shining for the Lord?

Reflection by Chris Seifert

Saturday, Week 2, Day 7

[Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus](#) by Helen H. Lemmel

O soul, are you weary and troubled?
No light in the darkness you see?
There's light for a look at the Savior,
And life more abundant and free!

Refrain:

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely
dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.

Through death into life everlasting
He passed, and we follow Him there;
O'er us sin no more hath dominion—
For more than conquerors we are!

Refrain

His Word shall not fail you—He promised;
Believe Him, and all will be well:
Then go to a world that is dying,
His perfect salvation to tell!

Refrain

It's so easy to become overwhelmed by the things of Earth. Do you ever feel that way? I do, and I have found a lot of comfort in the chorus of this song over many decades. It has served as a meditative prayer that ignited my imagination and helped soothe my soul as I sing the words and see Jesus' face in the sky, where the things of Earth were out of view. As I shifted my attention and rested in the tune, words, and images, I felt so much peace.

Just a couple of years ago, I learned that there were also verses. As I reflect on them today, I see how they mirror the path of discipleship. The first verse speaks to where we often begin our journey with Jesus, looking for comfort from our circumstances. The second verse illustrates God's grace and forgiveness, which can be so hard to receive! When we look at Jesus, our sins wash away. In the final verse, focusing on Jesus gives us the courage and conviction to lead people to Jesus wherever we are.

Where are you today in your journey with Jesus? Take a moment and imagine Jesus' face before you. Look full in His wonderful face. Do you feel the deep comfort of a God who is greater than your circumstances? Do you see your sins washing away? Do you hear Jesus calling to you outward? No matter your circumstances or where you are on your journey, Jesus is the final word.

Reflection by Deanna Matzen

Week 3

Jesus is One of Us



Christ Learning to Read, by Henry Ossawa Tanner

Sunday, Week 3, Day 1

Hebrews 2:14-18

¹⁴Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—¹⁵and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. ¹⁶For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants. ¹⁷For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Sermon Notes & Reflections

Gratitude

List at least 5 things from the previous week for which you are grateful.

Monday, Week 3, Day 2

Weekly forecast: this is a time to take stock and prepare yourself for the week ahead.

Check in: How is it with your soul? What are you finding challenging or encouraging about your Lenten practice?

Looking ahead to the week: what is coming up this week? Anything you are looking forward to? Anything you are wary of?

Watch out for... (what potential challenges are ahead?)

Hold onto... (what will help when facing those challenges)

Spend time in prayer about the week ahead. Consider using the words of the Psalm in your prayer.

Psalm 8

For the director of music. According to gittith. A psalm of David.

¹ Lord, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory in the heavens.
² Through the praise of children and infants
you have established a stronghold against
your enemies,
to silence the foe and the avenger.
³ When I consider your heavens, the work of
your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in
place,

⁴ what is mankind that you are mindful of
them,
human beings that you care for them?
⁵ You have made them a little lower than the
angels
and crowned them with glory and honor.
⁶ You made them rulers over the works of your
hands;
you put everything under their feet:
⁷ all flocks and herds, and the animals of the
wild,
⁸ the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea,
all that swim the paths of the seas.
⁹ Lord, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Tuesday, Week 3, Day 3

Hebrews 2:5-11

⁵It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. ⁶But there is a place where someone has testified:

“What is mankind that you are mindful of them,
a son of man that you care for him?

⁷You made them a little lower than the angels;
you crowned them with glory and honor

⁸ and put everything under their feet.”

In putting everything under them, God left nothing that is not subject to them. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them. ⁹But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

¹⁰In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. ¹¹Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.

Why did God give me even a glance after the fall? I had failed to live up to his expectations and had messed things up royally, didn't I? He could have kicked me out, sentenced me to death and started over. Seems like that would have been an easier solution for him. But he didn't. Instead, he had a plan. He did let me walk away...for a time.... but he gave me chance after chance to return. He did sentence me to death but then he conquered death on my behalf. He didn't start over; it was the same plan from the beginning. After a time of me struggling in the wilderness of my own sin and striving for control, Jesus came as one of us....” a little lower than the angels”. He suffered and died, as we do, and gave us all an example of how to return to God, how to do life “better”. Therefore, Jesus was crowned with glory and honor.

By God's beautiful, original plan, Jesus experienced death and took my (and your) place. Why? Because God has loved us since before time began. Because he is a God of grace, mercy and relationship. Because he wants us to be with him. In Jesus' death & resurrection, God creates a way for us to do just that. We too, will be resurrected.

Take time today and thank him for the gift of Jesus that welcomes us into a life forever, a better life, with the living God.

Reflection by Linda Muilenburg

Wednesday, Week 3, Day 4

Prayer Practice: The Examen

In the 1500s, St. Ignatius of Loyola developed a series of practices to help people see how God has been at work in their lives. One of those “Spiritual Exercises” is called the Prayer of Examen. In this prayer, we are encouraged to bring our daily lives to Jesus, looking for places of consolation (where we have noticed God) and desolation (where God has seemed far away). St. Ignatius used the prayer daily (sometimes hourly!), but it can also be adapted to reflect on a week or even a longer season.

How to pray the Examen:

Become aware of and rest in the presence of God

Find a comfortable position where you can still be alert. Breathe. Remember that God is always present. Rest. Take your time here. If it helps, imagine God seated with you.

Review the Day

Think through the past 24 hours (or week, or other period of time). What happened? Think of specific events or moments. When did you feel strong emotions? What made you angry? Did you experience joy or sadness? What brought excitement or boredom?

Engage your emotions with God. When did you sense God’s presence? When did He feel absent? When did you move toward God? When did you move away from Him? How did God speak to you today? When did He seem silent?

Respond

Choose an emotion, moment, or experience that stands out to explore more intentionally. Is one shouting for your attention? Is there one you want to avoid?

Talk to God about that moment. What do you want to tell Him? What is He saying to you? Is there something you need to do or stop doing? Ask the Spirit for direction. Do you need to confess, give thanks, pray for someone, repair a relationship? What specific action springs to mind?

Looking Forward

What is coming in the next day or week? What feelings surface? Where do you need to be especially aware of God’s presence? Allow these things to turn into prayer. Invite God in.

Remember to act on what came up in prayer today!

Thursday, Week 3, Day 5

Hebrews 2:14-18

¹⁴Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—¹⁵and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. ¹⁶For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants. ¹⁷For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Why did Jesus suffer when tempted? Because he had needs. Without needs (for food, respect, safety, etc.) there is no opening for temptation. Humans have needs. By becoming human, Jesus took on neediness and the resulting temptations.

God understands our weakness. “We do not have a high priest (Jesus) who is unable to sympathize with our weakness” (Hebrews 4:15). Did Jesus fear death? Yes, as he said in the garden of Gethsemane (“If it is possible, let this cup of suffering pass from me” (Matthew 26:39)). He dreaded pain and death and was tempted to avoid it. We all fear death, but we no longer have to fear it in the same way. Jesus has broken death’s ultimate power, so we no longer live in slavery to our fear of death.

God UNDERSTANDS our weakness. Just as a parent is not disappointed in their toddler for being unable to walk without running into furniture, God is not looking down from heaven at us with a disappointed frown. He understands our weakness, our needs, how hard it is to resist temptations toward pride, selfishness, fear, irritability, greed, jealousy, anger, self-worship . . . He has compassion on those he has made, for he understands that we are but dust (Psalm 103:14). He understands us: both because he made us and because he experienced temptation as one of us.

However, not only does God understand our weakness, he understands our potential and the end of the story. He can see down the road to what happens next when we choose to walk in darkness, rather than light. He wants (and is able) to help us resist temptation and avoid the pain it inevitably leads to.

Into which of your areas of temptation is it time to invite Jesus, who genuinely understands your struggle?

Reflection by Rachel Freund

Friday Week 3, Day 6

Lectio Divina

Philippians 2:5-11

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place

and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,

to the glory of God the Father.

Be Still

Take a deep breath or two. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak through the Scripture.

Read

What does the Scripture say? Slowly read the verses, looking for details, key words, and concepts.

Meditate

Read the passage again. Imagine yourself in the passage: what do you experience, think or feel? What catches your attention? Mentally “chew” on the words and images.

Pray

Read again! How does this connect with your life? Talk with God about the issues that come up. What comforts you? What challenges you? How might God be inviting you to respond?

Contemplate

Read one more time. Savor being in God’s presence. Sit with Him and allow Him to search your heart. You may find that words come to mind, but maybe you just want to be quiet. Take as much time as you need.

What gift of grace is Jesus, my redeemer
There is no more for heaven now to give
He is my joy, my righteousness, and freedom
My steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus
For my life is wholly bound to His
Oh, how strange and divine, I can sing: All is mine!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

The night is dark but I am not forsaken
For by my side, the Saviour He will stay
I labour on in weakness and rejoicing
For in my need, His power is displayed

To this I hold, my Shepherd will defend me
Through the deepest valley, He will lead
Oh, the night has been won, and I shall overcome
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

No fate I dread, I know I am forgiven
The future sure, the price it has been paid
For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon
And He was raised to overthrow the grave

To this I hold, my sin has been defeated
Jesus now and ever is my plea
Oh, the chains are released, I can sing: I am free!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

With every breath, I long to follow Jesus
For He has said that He will bring me home
And day by day I know He will renew me
Until I stand with joy before the throne

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus
All the glory evermore to Him
When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat:
Yet not I, but through Christ in me!

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus
All the glory evermore to Him
When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat:
Yet not I, but through Christ in me!

When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat:
Yet not I, but through Christ in me!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me!

One year as Christmas approached my clock radio died. I don't recall saying, "All I want for Christmas is a clock radio", but I did float a few hints. Come the big day there was a package under the tree from my father that looked to be exactly what I wanted. As everyone else watched (which is how we did gifts in my family), I carefully unwrapped it and saw...an amazing Zoom/Macro lens that was perfect for my camera. Fortunately, I took a breath and stopped myself before saying something silly like, "But, Dad, I wanted a clock radio!" The gift he chose for me took more insight and planning and shopping (and money) than a simple alarm clock. (And gave me many years of enjoyment documenting my travels!)

Have you ever prayed for something thinking that God should give it to you *just because you want it*? And then been oddly disappointed when instead of granting your wish He gave you what you *really needed*? "But, God, I wanted that job or house or... And no, God, not patience *again*!" Sometimes I forget that God is the greatest gift giver ever, and delights in giving me more than I know I need or could ever deserve. "What gift of grace is Jesus, my redeemer. There is no more for heaven now to give." The ultimate gift from a loving Father is already mine. THANK YOU

Are you waiting for an answer to prayer? Do you wonder if God really is listening? Do you ever feel alone? Today's song reminds us that as believers we already have everything we need – anything else is blessing upon blessing. We have joy, freedom, peace, hope, forgiveness and MUCH MUCH MORE! Slowly chew on these lyrics; speak them aloud. Picture in your mind's eye what these gifts look like in your life. *Yet not I, but through Christ in me!*

Reflection by Elaine Weltz

Week 4

Jesus is Greater than Moses



Moses Approaching Mt. Sinai, by Lesser Ury

Sunday, Week 4, Day 1

Hebrews 3:1-6

Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest. ²He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. ³Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. ⁴For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. ⁵"Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house," bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future. ⁶But Christ is faithful as the Son over God's house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory.

Sermon Notes & Reflections

Gratitude

List at least 5 things from the previous week for which you are grateful.

Monday, Week 4, Day 2

Weekly forecast: this is a time to take stock and prepare yourself for the week ahead.

Check in: How is it with your soul? What are you finding challenging or encouraging about your Lenten practice?

Looking ahead to the week: what is coming up this week? Anything you are looking forward to? Anything you are wary of?

Watch out for... (what potential challenges are ahead?)

Hold onto... (what will help when facing those challenges)

Spend time in prayer about the week ahead. Consider using the words of the Psalm in your prayer.

Psalm 95

¹Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord;
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our
salvation.

²Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and extol him with music and song.

³For the Lord is the great God,
the great King above all gods.

⁴In his hand are the depths of the earth,
and the mountain peaks belong to him.

⁵The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.

⁶Come, let us bow down in worship,
let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;

⁷for he is our God and we are the people of
his pasture, the flock under his care.

Today, if only you would hear his voice,

⁸“Do not harden your hearts as you did at
Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the
wilderness,

⁹where your ancestors tested me; they tried
me, though they had seen what I did.

¹⁰For forty years I was angry with that
generation;

I said, ‘They are a people whose hearts go
astray, and they have not known my ways.’

¹¹So I declared on oath in my anger,
‘They shall never enter my rest.’ ”

Tuesday, Week 4, Day 3

Deuteronomy 18:15-19

¹⁵The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me [Moses] from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. ¹⁶For this is what you asked of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, “Let us not hear the voice of the Lord our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die.”

¹⁷The Lord said to me: “What they say is good. ¹⁸I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. ¹⁹I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name.

Mark 9:2,7

²After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. ...

⁷Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!”

John 14:23-24

²³Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. ²⁴Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

Moses was amazing. Up on the mountain, he spoke with the Lord directly. He brought the words of God to the Israelites. After being in the presence of God, he covered his face because he was radiating the Lord’s presence and it was too much for people (Exodus 34:33-35). And yet he was just a man. He did not have the full word to bring. So God promises another to come, one to whom we should listen.

A long time later, Jesus goes up a mountain and is changed, glowing with the glory of God. The Beloved Son. Listen to him. He not only brings us the words of God, he is The Word. There’s nothing lost in translation. When he speaks, it is the Father’s voice.

I’m struck by how listening to Jesus starts and ends in love. It’s the Father’s love that prompts him to send Jesus to bring us home. It’s love that perks up our ears to listen. And listening leads to following. I wonder what you hear as the Lord calls to you?

Let’s listen. Take a few deep breaths. Quiet down for a minute. Just listen.

Reflection by Betty Berg

Wednesday, Week 4, Day 4

Prayer Practice: Confession

⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹ Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹² It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³ But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. ¹⁴ This is why it is said: “Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” (Ephesians 5:8-14)

The practice of confession invites us to tell the truth – about ourselves and about the mercy of God. In it, we bring all the dark, hidden parts of ourselves into the light so that they may be redeemed.

Sin thrives in secrecy. Confession offers the opportunity to admit those parts of us that we would rather remain unknown. We bring all of it to Jesus, who already knows us completely and has already provided for our forgiveness.

2 Ways into Confession

Private confession directly to God. This is the avenue we are most familiar with – we practice it each month as we prepare for Communion. This is a time to come directly to God and get right with him. Sometimes it can be helpful to have a guide: consider using Hebrews 13 as a list of different areas of our lives that might need the light of Christ.

Confession to a trusted companion (a confessor). *Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. (James 5:16a)* It can be really helpful to say the hidden things out loud to a trusted fellow believer. It is powerful to bring another person into the secrets of our lives. It can also be awkward and very vulnerable, so be sure to pick someone who makes you feel safe. The job of the confessor is to listen with compassion and speak words of forgiveness. They are not there to judge or fix anything, but rather to speak the assurance of Christ’s grace and mercy. This doesn’t need to be your entire life story – unless there is something from the past that needs extra light, just focus on what is pressing this week.

A prayer to use in your time of confession (from the Book of Common Prayer):

Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)*

Thursday, Week 4, Day 5

Ephesians 2:11-22

¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)—
¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Peace. That is a theme that I noticed in this passage. Jesus is our peace. Jesus makes peace. Jesus preaches peace to people who are near and far. The word peace is used 4 times in verses 14-18. That’s a lot of repetition. Paul is working on uniting the Gentiles and Jews in this passage, which was not easy. The Jews were having a hard time accepting the Gentiles into this new community because of what they were taught through the old covenant.

But with Jesus, there is peace. With Jesus there is reconciliation. Everyone is a citizen and part of the body through Jesus. Verse 18 says, “For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.” I find this to be so encouraging. We get to be included, not by anything we have done, but because of Jesus. We are united because of Jesus. We find peace because of Jesus.

As we strive for peace and unity in this divided world, how can you live into this peace that we receive through Jesus? How can you find common ground and unity with someone who you think might have nothing in common with you?

Reflection by Kristin Jackson

Friday, Week 4, Day 6

Lectio Divina

Hebrews 3:16-19,

¹⁶Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? ¹⁷And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness? ¹⁸And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? ¹⁹So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.

4:8-16

⁸For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. ⁹There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; ¹⁰for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. ¹¹Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.

¹²For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. ¹³Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Be Still

Take a deep breath or two. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak through the Scripture.

Read

What does the Scripture say? Slowly read the verses, looking for details, key words, and concepts.

Meditate

Read the passage again. Imagine yourself in the passage: what do you experience, think or feel? What catches your attention? Mentally "chew" on the words and images.

Pray

Read again! How does this connect with your life? Talk with God about the issues that come up. What comforts you? What challenges you? How might God be inviting you to respond?

Contemplate

Read one more time. Savor being in God's presence. Sit with Him and allow Him to search your heart. You may find that words come to mind, but maybe you just want to be quiet. Take as much time as you need.

Saturday, Week 4, Day 7

At the Table, Josh Garrels

I went the ways of wayward winds
In a world of trouble and sin
Walked a long and crooked mile
Behind a million rank and file
Forgot where I came from
Somewhere back when I was young
I was a good man's child

'Cause I lost some nameless things
My innocence flew away from me
She had to hide her face from my desire
To embrace forbidden fire
But at night I dream
She's singing over me
Oh, oh, my child

Come on home, home to me
And I will hold you in my arms
And joyful be
There will always, always be
A place for you at my table
Return to me

Wondering where I might begin
Hear a voice upon the wind
She's singing faint but singing true
Son, there ain't nothing you can do
But listen close and follow me
I'll take you where you're meant to be
Just don't lose faith

So I put my hand upon the plow
Wipe the sweat up from my brow
Plant the good seed along the way
As I look forward to the day
When at last I see
My Father run to me
Singing oh, my child

Come on home, home to me
And I will hold you in my arms
And joyful be
There will always, always be
A place for you at my table
Return to me
My child

At the Table is such a beautiful song, based on Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son. In the song, we meet up with the singer having recognized his waywardness and distance from God the Father, but with the hope of reuniting in person some day. In the parable, the son is described as journeying home immediately after "coming to his senses". In the song, on the other hand, it feels like the journey home is much longer, perhaps representing the entire rest of his life, with anticipation of reuniting with God the Father for eternity in Heaven.

Something else interesting in the song is the personification of the Holy Spirit in the feminine, present with him, whispering encouragement, reassuring him of his place at the Father's Table when he returns home. Although despite being with him, the Spirit "had to hide her face" when he gave in to sin, because despite God's grace, He is also Holy.

I encourage you to reflect on where you are in your own journey today. Do you resonate with the Prodigal Son, either in his waywardness or his returning home? Or has your journey been less dramatic, perhaps more of a long time in the desert? Either way, I hope you'll be encouraged by the words in the chorus of this song. A promise of God's abundant grace and provision at His table for you if you will soften your heart, listen to His voice, and return to Him. Listen to the song one more time with eyes closed, and imaging what that greeting will be like.

Reflection by Bill Matzen

Week 5

Jesus is a Better Priest



Ecce Homo, Behold the Man, by Antonio Ciseri

Sunday, Week 5, Day 1

Hebrews 4:14-16,

¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

7:23-8:2

²³Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; ²⁴but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. ²⁵Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them

²⁶Such a high priest truly meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. ²⁷Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. ²⁸For the law appoints as high priests men in all their weakness; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

8 Now the main point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, ²and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by a mere human being.

Sermon Notes & Reflections

Gratitude

List at least 5 things from the previous week for which you are grateful.

Monday, Week 5, Day 2

Weekly forecast: this is a time to take stock and prepare yourself for the week ahead.

Check in: How is it with your soul? What are you finding challenging or encouraging about your Lenten practice?

Looking ahead to the week: what is coming up this week? Anything you are looking forward to? Anything you are wary of?

Watch out for... (what potential challenges are ahead?)

Hold onto... (what will help when facing those challenges)

Spend time in prayer about the week ahead. Consider using the words of the Psalm in your prayer.

Psalm 51

*For the director of music. A psalm of David.
When the prophet Nathan came to him after
David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.*

¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.
² Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.
³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.
⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge.
⁵ Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.
⁶ Yet you desired faithfulness even in the
womb;
you taught me wisdom in that secret place.
⁷ Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
⁹ Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.

¹⁰ Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
¹¹ Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.
¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
so that sinners will turn back to you.
¹⁴ Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O
God,
you who are God my Savior,
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.
¹⁵ Open my lips, Lord,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
¹⁶ You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would
bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.
¹⁷ My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart
you, God, will not despise.
¹⁸ May it please you to prosper Zion,
to build up the walls of Jerusalem.
¹⁹ Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the
righteous,
in burnt offerings offered whole;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.

Tuesday Week 5, Day 3

Hebrews 7:18-28

¹⁸The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless ¹⁹(for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.

²⁰And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath, ²¹but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him:

“The Lord has sworn

and will not change his mind:

‘You are a priest forever.’ ”

²²Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantor of a better covenant.

²³Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; ²⁴but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. ²⁵Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

²⁶Such a high priest truly meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. ²⁷Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. ²⁸For the law appoints as high priests men in all their weakness; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

I have always struggled with the few scriptures that refer to the priest and order of Melchizedek. This passage continues from Hebrews 7:1-10. As I consider this passage in light of preparing to remember Jesus’s death on the cross for our sins, it is clear to me that his obedience to death changed more than just the forgiveness of our sins. It shows me that Jesus, while waiting at the right hand of the Almighty God, is busy carrying out all the intercessory actions that were performed by the priests descended from LEVI. These are the comforts we can experience from Jesus Christ as we trust and obey each day in our own life.

Verses 7:24-25 are promises that we can hold on to and remind ourselves about each day, no matter what is occurring to us or around us each day. Jesus lives to make intercession for us! So then what can stand to separate from Jesus’ love?? NOTHING!! Stand in these promises.

Reflection by Kurt Thompson

Wednesday Week 5, Day 4

Prayer Practice: Breath Prayers

One simple way to pray is to link a short phrase to your breathing.

Breath prayers developed as a way to “pray without ceasing” and to “let every breath praise the Lord.” The idea is to help prayer be as automatic as breathing in and out. They can be especially helpful if you find your mind wandering as you pray, giving an anchor to our thoughts.

These short prayers often come from Scripture, and follow a simple pattern. As you inhale, say a word or phrase about God, even something as simple as a name or title for God. As you exhale, offer a request or response.

One of the most famous breath prayers is known as the Jesus Prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, Have mercy on me, a sinner”. In *The Way of a Pilgrim* (a spiritual classic from the Eastern Orthodox branch of the Church), the author describes how he learned to pray this prayer thousands of times a day!

For today, look at the list below, and select one prayer to use. Breathe comfortably a few times, and then start saying the phrases as you inhale and exhale. Do this at least 10 times, or for as long as you’d like.

Come back to this prayer as often as you can today!

Breath prayers from some of our recent verses:

Inhale

Exhale

Great high priest,

you meet my needs

Compassionate God,

wash me clean

God of Joshua,

give me rest

Lord Jesus Christ,

have mercy on me

You are also welcome to look back over the verses we have used and make your own breath prayer.

Thursday, Week 5, Day 5

Romans 5:1-11

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.³ Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope.⁵ And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

⁶You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! ¹¹Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Consider eternal separation from God. Consider spiritual torment. Consider eternity. That's our destiny for our choice made in the Garden of Eden. And we make that same choice countless times every day by our attitudes, thoughts (or thoughtlessness) and selfishness.

How can we ever get right with God? On our own, we can't. He knew that when He created us. Imagine, creating humankind, capable of knowing God, loving Him and worshipping Him. And knowing we would turn away from Him to follow our own ways rather than His ways. And yet still, He created us and loves us so much that He provided a way to redeem us at great, great cost.

Now consider the enormous cost for that redemption. And the love that is behind that cost. God sacrificed His son (would you sacrifice your son?). He was beaten, scourged, nailed to the cross, pierced in His side, all of which pales when we consider the spiritual torment He suffered. He experienced that which we deserve, multiplied for every one of us for all eternity in Hell, somehow, in ways we will never understand, condensed into those 3 days before His resurrection. This is what He suffered – taking what all humanity deserves, willingly upon Himself. Why was He sweating droplets of blood in Gethsemane? Because He knew what Hell meant. And still he was willing. That is some kind of love.

Every time I sin, I become the one beating Him, thrusting the crown of thorns down on His head, sending Him to Hell. And after all of that, while He is beaten and bruised by me, He reaches out His hand and says "It's OK. It's OK. I love you..." That is some kind of love.

Meditating on God's redeeming love and what it cost can be gut-wrenching. So be sure also to meditate on the resurrection! A message of joy and victory!

Reflection by David Ender

Friday, Week 5, Day 6

Lectio Divina

Mark 10:35-45

³⁵Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.”

³⁶“What do you want me to do for you?” he asked.

³⁷They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.”

³⁸“You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?”

³⁹“We can,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, ⁴⁰but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.”

⁴¹When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. ⁴²Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ⁴³Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. ⁴⁵For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Be Still

Take a deep breath or two. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak through the Scripture.

Read

What does the Scripture say? Slowly read the verses, looking for details, key words, and concepts.

Meditate

Read the passage again. Imagine yourself in the passage: what do you experience, think or feel? What catches your attention? Mentally “chew” on the words and images.

Pray

Read again! How does this connect with your life? Talk with God about the issues that come up. What comforts you? What challenges you? How might God be inviting you to respond?

Contemplate

Read one more time. Savor being in God’s presence. Sit with Him and allow Him to search your heart. You may find that words come to mind, but maybe you just want to be quiet. Take as much time as you need.

Saturday, Week 5, Day 7

[O Love that will not let me go](#)

O Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

O light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain,
That morn shall tearless be.

O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

Truly an anthem of endurance that reflects the emotions of the ancient psalmists, “Oh Love That Will Not Let Me Go” sheds light on an often overlooked truth of Christ—He is the original. Yeshua is the honest measure by which all counterfeits are exposed, trusting that God Himself sifts the wheat from the chaff, gathering what is useful and removing what is excess. In doing so, He reveals Christ's deep, personal devotion to His children even as the world drifts. Pain, like a hammer, will either sharpen us to a razor's edge or grind us back into dust. Yet when surrendered, it becomes a tool in God's hands, chiseling our souls into the image of the Son of Man. I am encouraged knowing that what the enemy intended for evil, our Father has purposed for good, offering timeless evidence of a loving Creator who works all things for the good of those who love Him. This truth steadies me, reminding me that suffering is not wasted but shaped with intention and hope.

The lyric, “I lay in dust, life's glory dead, and from the ground there blossoms red, life that shall endless be,” feels deeply personal, declaring that our identity is not rooted in what the world offers but in the eternity God promises—where death, pain, and suffering are no more. Our true reward is not earthly recognition but dwelling fully in His presence, where glory is restored and life is made new. In response, Yahweh invites me into obedience, calling me to remain faithful to the sheep He has entrusted to my care.

As we examine our lives with holy curiosity, may we pray: Holy Spirit, open the eyes of my heart, and teach me to fix them on the Savior rather than the storm.

Reflection by Jordyn Cooper

Week 6

Jesus Brings a Better Covenant



The Sacrifice of the Old Covenant, by Peter Paul Rubens

Sunday, Week 6, Day 1

Hebrews 8:3-13

³Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. ⁴If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already priests who offer the gifts prescribed by the law. ⁵They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: “See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.” ⁶But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises.

⁷For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. ⁸But God found fault with the people and said:

“The days are coming, declares the Lord,
when I will make a new covenant
with the people of Israel
and with the people of Judah.
⁹It will not be like the covenant
I made with their ancestors
when I took them by the hand
to lead them out of Egypt,
because they did not remain faithful to my
covenant,
and I turned away from them,
declares the Lord.

¹⁰This is the covenant I will establish with the
people of Israel
after that time, declares the Lord.
I will put my laws in their minds
and write them on their hearts.
I will be their God,
and they will be my people.
¹¹No longer will they teach their neighbor,
or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’
because they will all know me,
from the least of them to the greatest.
¹²For I will forgive their wickedness
and will remember their sins no more.”

¹³By calling this covenant “new,” he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear.

Sermon Notes & Reflections

Gratitude

List at least 5 things from the previous week for which you are grateful.

Monday, Week 6, Day 2

Weekly forecast: this is a time to take stock and prepare yourself for the week ahead.

Check in: How is it with your soul? What are you finding challenging or encouraging about your Lenten practice?

Looking ahead to the week: what is coming up this week? Anything you are looking forward to? Anything you are wary of?

Watch out for... (what potential challenges are ahead?)

Hold onto... (what will help when facing those challenges?)

Spend time in prayer about the week ahead. Consider using the words of the Psalm in your prayer.

Psalm 32

Of David. A maskil.

¹ Blessed is the one
whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.

² Blessed is the one
whose sin the Lord does not count against
them and in whose spirit is no deceit.

³ When I kept silent,
my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.

⁴ For day and night
your hand was heavy on me;
my strength was sapped
as in the heat of summer.

⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you
and did not cover up my iniquity.
I said, "I will confess
my transgressions to the Lord."
And you forgave
the guilt of my sin.

⁶ Therefore let all the faithful pray to you
while you may be found;
surely the rising of the mighty waters
will not reach them.

⁷ You are my hiding place;
you will protect me from trouble
and surround me with songs of deliverance.

⁸ I will instruct you and teach you in the way
you should go;
I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.

⁹ Do not be like the horse or the mule,
which have no understanding
but must be controlled by bit and bridle
or they will not come to you.

¹⁰ Many are the woes of the wicked,
but the Lord's unfailing love
surrounds the one who trusts in him.

¹¹ Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you
righteous;
sing, all you who are upright in heart!

Tuesday, Week 6, Day 3

Hebrews 9:1-10

“Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary. ²A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand and the table with its consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place. ³Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, ⁴which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron’s staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant. ⁵Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. But we cannot discuss these things in detail now.

⁶When everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry. ⁷But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. ⁸The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still functioning. ⁹This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. ¹⁰They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order.”

In my youth I did ballet for nine years. We would perform two ballets each year and prior to these performances there were many rehearsals. First, we would rehearse in the studio for months, then there was a week of nightly dress-rehearsals in the theater. All of this, to ultimately perform the show only eight times. Far more rehearsing than performing -- though all of it very fun!

Similarly, the Israelites had been engaged in the God-ordained rituals of the tabernacle/temple off-and-on for over 1,000 years prior to Jesus. There were special acts and symbols to convey the meanings God wanted them to understand. In the Holy Place were 12 loaves of bread (representing the Israelite tribes) continually present before God’s sight (the lamp), with the prayers of supplication (incense) interceding between the two. Moving toward the Most Holy Place, one would see cherubim (creatures half-earthly/half-heavenly) displayed everywhere, to warn and make clear that this was the threshold where heaven touches earth. And finally, the ark of the covenant, representing God’s throne, with the blood of atonement sprinkled on the “seat” that rested above the tablets of the law (requirements for perfection) and beneath perfection itself (God’s presence on the throne).

The Israelite priests replayed the ritual drama: daily, weekly, yearly (replacing the loaves and incense, lighting the lamp, sprinkling the atonement blood, and doing various other sacrifices and ceremonies). Rehearsing, rehearsing, rehearsing – reminding, teaching, trying to understand... But it was never the real deal; not the true performance. That occurred only once, when Jesus performed the actual sacrifice and became the true atonement between God’s perfect law and God’s perfect presence.

In what ways do you think it may have felt different living under the old covenant, compared to living on this side of Christ’s atoning sacrifice?

Reflection by Rachel Freund

Wednesday, Week 6, Day 4

Revisit practice: Prayer of Examen

Welcome back to the prayer of Examen. Enjoy some time to really dive deep with Christ into the nitty gritty of your life.

Become aware of and rest in the presence of God

Find a comfortable position where you can be still and alert. Breathe. Remember that God is always present. Rest. Take your time here. If it helps, imagine God seated with you.

Review the Day

Think through the past 24 hours (or week, or other period of time). What happened? Think of specific events or moments. When did you feel strong emotions? What made you angry? When did you experience joy or sadness? What brought excitement or boredom?

Engage your emotions with God. When did you sense God's presence? When did He feel absent? When did you move toward God? When did you move away from Him? How did God speak to you today? When did He seem silent?

Respond

Choose an emotion, moment, or experience that stands out to explore more intentionally. Is one shouting for your attention? Is there one you want to avoid?

Talk to God about that moment. What do you want to tell Him? What is He saying to you? Is there something you need to do or stop doing? Ask the Spirit for direction. Do you need to confess, give thanks, pray for someone, repair a relationship? What specific action springs to mind?

Looking Forward

What is coming in the next day or week? What feelings surface? Where do you need to be especially aware of God's presence? Allow these things to turn into prayer. Invite God in.

Remember to act on what came up in prayer today!

Thursday, Week 6, Day 5

2 Corinthians 3:3-18

³You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

⁴Such confidence we have through Christ before God. ⁵Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. ⁶He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

⁷Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, transitory though it was, ⁸will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? ⁹If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! ¹⁰For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. ¹¹And if what was transitory came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!

¹²Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. ¹³We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. ¹⁴But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

The Old Covenant, while still a gift of grace from God, led to works-righteousness. And when our righteousness (rightness with God) is based on our works, we will always fall short.

In Jesus we have the New Covenant. And when we enter that covenant with God through trusting Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, the Spirit works in us to transform us. We still fall short because we don't live perfectly by the Spirit. But God's Spirit never leaves us and is constantly working in us to transform us to be more Christ-like.

As Paul writes in verse 18, "And we...are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory which comes from...the Spirit." So, let's be sensitive to the Spirit's work and leading in our lives. The Spirit is often that "still, small voice" that is leading us to live with courage and conviction. The Spirit speaks to us through God's word, reminding us of our identity in Christ and all that flows out of that: our Jesus-centered values, attitudes, and behaviors.

So, praise God for the Holy Spirit that moves in our lives! May we be ever sensitive to his ever-present leading in our lives, so we might be more Christ-like and bring glory to God.

Reflection by Brian North

Friday, Week 6, Day 6

Lectio Divina

John 4:4-26

⁴ Now [Jesus] had to go through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" ⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

¹¹ "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"

¹³ Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

¹⁶ He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

¹⁷ "I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

¹⁹ "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

²¹ "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come[†] when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

²⁵ The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

²⁶ Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

(Continued on next page)

(Lectio Continued)

Be Still Take a deep breath or two. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak through the Scripture.

Read What does the Scripture say? Slowly read the verses, looking for details, key words, and concepts.

Meditate Read the passage again. Imagine yourself in the passage: what do you experience, think or feel? What catches your attention? Mentally “chew” on the words and images.

Pray Read again! How does this connect with your life? Talk with God about the issues that come up. What comforts you? What challenges you? How might God be inviting you to respond?

Contemplate Read one more time. Savor being in God’s presence. Sit with Him and allow Him to search your heart. You may find that words come to mind, but maybe you just want to be quiet.

Saturday, Week 6, Day 7

Grace that Is Greater

Marvelous grace of our loving Lord
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilled

Grace, grace, God's grace
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace
Grace that is greater than all our sin

Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace
Freely bestowed on all who believe!
You that are longing to see His face
Will you this moment His grace receive?

Grace, grace, God's grace
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace
Grace that is greater than all our sin

Ezekiel received a vision of a river flowing from the heart of the temple, getting deeper and deeper the farther it went (Ezekiel 47). Everywhere this river touched, life sprang up: trees and fish in abundance, even the salty waters of the Dead Sea turned fresh. The presence and power of the living God transforming whatever it encounters. Living water welling up to eternal life.

It reminds me of that great line from Paul: “where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 5: 20-21) This song has the same feel. Like waves rolling up a beach, gaining ground bit by bit. Grace, grace, God’s grace.

As you go about today, let that refrain echo in your heart and mind. (It’s so catchy, it won’t be hard to get it stuck in your head!) Grace, grace, God’ grace. Grace that is greater than all our sin. Freely bestowed on all who believe. Let it be a call to see God’s face and know his presence and power in each moment. With each repetition, imagine that living water washing over you. What new life will spring up?

Reflection by Betty Berg

Week 7
Holy Week
Jesus is the Greater Sacrifice



Agnus Dei (Lamb of God), by Francisco de Zurbarán

Palm Sunday, Week 7, Day 1

Hebrews 9:24-28

²⁴ For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. ²⁵ Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. ²⁶ Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, ²⁸ so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Sermon Notes & Reflections

Gratitude

List at least 5 things from the previous week for which you are grateful.

Monday, Week 7, Day 2

Weekly forecast: this is a time to take stock and prepare yourself for the week ahead.

Check in: How is it with your soul? What are you finding challenging or encouraging about your Lenten practice?

Looking ahead to the week: what is coming up this week? Anything you are looking forward to? Anything you are wary of?

Watch out for... (what potential challenges are ahead?)

Hold onto... (what will help when facing those challenges)

Spend time in prayer about the week ahead. Consider using the words of the Psalm in your prayer.

Psalm 22:1-19

For the director of music. To the tune of "The Doe of the Morning." A psalm of David.

¹ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from saving me,
so far from my cries of anguish?

² My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,
by night, but I find no rest.

³ Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;
you are the one Israel praises.

⁴ In you our ancestors put their trust;
they trusted and you delivered them.

⁵ To you they cried out and were saved;
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

⁶ But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by everyone, despised by the people.

⁷ All who see me mock me;
they hurl insults, shaking their heads.

⁸ "He trusts in the Lord," they say,
"let the Lord rescue him.

Let him deliver him,
since he delights in him."

⁹ Yet you brought me out of the womb;
you made me trust in you, even at my
mother's breast.

¹⁰ From birth I was cast on you;
from my mother's womb you have been my
God.

¹¹ Do not be far from me,
for trouble is near
and there is no one to help.

¹² Many bulls surround me;
strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.

¹³ Roaring lions that tear their prey
open their mouths wide against me.

¹⁴ I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint.

My heart has turned to wax;
it has melted within me.

¹⁵ My mouth is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;
you lay me in the dust of death.

¹⁶ Dogs surround me,
a pack of villains encircles me;
they pierce my hands and my feet.

¹⁷ All my bones are on display;
people stare and gloat over me.

¹⁸ They divide my clothes among them
and cast lots for my garment.

¹⁹ But you, Lord, do not be far from me.
You are my strength; come quickly to help
me.

Tuesday, Week 7, Day 3

Romans 5:12-17

¹²Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned—

¹³To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not charged against anyone's account where there is no law. ¹⁴Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come.

¹⁵But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! ¹⁶Nor can the gift of God be compared with the result of one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. ¹⁷For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!

So here I am, in a beautiful garden. I can do anything I want. God has given me dominion over everything. I even have the most beautiful wife in the whole world. God gave me one little rule to follow – you can eat from any tree in the garden, just do not eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. So, what do I do? I eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. One act of disobedience brought the wages of death upon the world – to all mankind. It changed everything.

It seems so simple that this sin could have been avoided, but could it? Look at us now. There are far more temptations and pitfalls it seems in this world today and it always comes down to a choice whether we eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil or not. The beauty of the picture Paul paints for us in this passage is so encouraging to me. But by the grace of the One. He says the gift from Jesus is not like the trespass, for many died because of one trespass but the gracious gift of Jesus frees us ALL of the multitudes of transgressions and failures of the many who accept this amazing gracious gift. Jesus brings us into the perfect righteousness of God.

“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”. (Romans 5:6-8)

Reflection by Randy Muilenburg

Wednesday, Week 7, Day 4

Lectio Divina

Mark 14:32-42

³²They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” ³³He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. ³⁴“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” he said to them. “Stay here and keep watch.”

³⁵Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. ³⁶“*Abba*, Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

³⁷Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Simon,” he said to Peter, “are you asleep? Couldn’t you keep watch for one hour? ³⁸Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

³⁹Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. ⁴⁰When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.

⁴¹Returning the third time, he said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. ⁴²Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

Be Still

Take a deep breath or two. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak through the Scripture.

Read

What does the Scripture say? Slowly read the verses, looking for details, key words, and concepts.

Meditate

Read the passage again. Imagine yourself in the passage: what do you experience, think or feel? What catches your attention? Mentally “chew” on the words and images.

Pray

Read again! How does this connect with your life? Talk with God about the issues that come up. What comforts you? What challenges you? How might God be inviting you to respond?

Contemplate

Read one more time. Savor being in God’s presence. Sit with Him and allow Him to search your heart. You may find that words come to mind, but maybe you just want to be quiet. Take as much time as you need.

Maundy Thursday, Week 7, Day 5

Maundy Thursday remembers the night before Jesus' death, when he gathered with his disciples to celebrate the Passover meal. In that Passover meal, which itself looks back to God's salvation of his people from slavery in Egypt, Jesus gave us a new meal to remember his body and blood shed for us. He also gave us a new command – to love one another as he loves us. Maundy Thursday gets its name from this command, which in Latin is “mandatum.”

At Rose Hill, as with many other churches, we hold our own special gathering to remember not just that Last Supper, but also what came after: Jesus' prayer of surrender in the Garden of Gethsemane, his betrayal, arrest, and sham of a trial. It is a time to remember God's salvation of all people from slavery to sin and death. We remember the depths of Jesus' love for us.

You are invited to gather together for:

Rose Hill Church Community Meal (6 pm) and Maundy Thursday Service (7 pm)

The passage for tonight's service is: Hebrews 9:16-22

¹⁶In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, ¹⁷because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. ¹⁸This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. ¹⁹When Moses had proclaimed every command of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. ²⁰He said, “This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep.” ²¹In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. ²²In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

If you do not come to the Maundy Thursday service, consider reading John 13 & 18.

Good Friday, Week 7, Day 6

Optional practice: Consider fasting from food for part or all of today or tomorrow.

Rose Hill's Sanctuary will be open from 12-3

Come for as long or short of a time as you would like for an open time of quiet reflection.

Jesus' Last Words: Many people have found it helpful to spend time reflecting on the words Jesus said from the cross. These were the things Jesus felt were most important to say, even as he was dying. As you read them, try to picture yourself in the scene. What would you have seen, heard, smelled, tasted or touched? What would it have felt like to have Jesus speak these words to you? What do they show you about what was important to Jesus? How do they continue the same work he had already been doing on earth? What new work is being done?

Forgiveness

³²Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. ³³When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. ³⁴Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. (Luke 23:32-34)

Salvation

³⁵The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is God's Messiah, the Chosen One."

³⁶The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar ³⁷and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself."

³⁸There was a written notice above him, which read: this is the king of the Jews.

³⁹One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!"

⁴⁰But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? ⁴¹We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

⁴²Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

⁴³Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:35-43)

Adoption

²⁵Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," ²⁷and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. (John 19:26-27).

(Continued on next page)

Abandonment and the Weight of Sin

⁴⁵ From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. ⁴⁶ About three in the afternoon **Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?”** (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). (Matthew 27:44-46).

The Suffering Servant

²⁸ Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, **Jesus said, “I am thirsty.”** ²⁹ A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips. (John 19:28).

Accomplished Work

³⁰ When he had received the drink, **Jesus said, “It is finished.”** With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (John 19:30).

Surrender

⁴⁴ It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, ⁴⁵ for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ **Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.”** When he had said this, he breathed his last. (Luke 23:44-46).

Take as much time as you need to respond. What emotions are stirring in you? Consider offering a prayer of gratitude or lament, or simply sitting in silent watchfulness.

Holy Saturday, Week 7, Day 7

Awakening, by Sara Groves

Dress down your pretty faith,
give me something real
Leave out the Thee and Thou
and speak to me now
Speak to my pain and confusion
Speak through my fears and my pride
Speak to the part of me that knows I'm something
deep down inside

I know that I am not perfect,
but compare me to most
In a world of hurt in a world of anger
I think I'm holding my own
And I know that you've said there is more to life
No I am not satisfied
But there are mornings I wake up and I'm just
thankful to be alive

I've known for quite a while that I am not whole
I've remembered the body and the mind, but
dissected the soul
Now something inside is awakening
Like a dream I once had and forgot
And it's something I'm scared of
and something I don't want to stop

I woke up this morning and realized
Jesus is not a portrait
Or stained glass windows
Or hymns
Or all the tradition that surrounds us

I thought it would be hard to believe in,
but it's not hard at all
To believe I've sinned
And fallen short
Of the glory of God

He's not asking me to change in my joy for
martyrdom
He's asking to take my place
To stand in the gap that I have formed
With His real
And his sweet
And his real amazing grace

And it's not just a sign or a sacrament
It's not just a metaphor for love
The blood is real and it's not just a symbol of
your faith

So leave out the thee and thou
And speak now

Maybe I'm a little weird, but I have a love-hate relationship with routines.

Routines are awesome. They give anchors, ways to give order to our chaos. I long for the illusion of control a fresh planner gives. It's all laid out, neat and tidy. Our faith, too, has time tested routines. I love the traditions of following Jesus. They give me a place to stand, and help me know how to live day to day.

But I kind of hate routines too. Whenever I make a good solid plan, after a little while I inevitably start feeling trapped by it. It becomes a path so worn that I wonder why I'm still walking it. We sing the same songs, hear the same words, do the same things. Does the message of the cross and empty tomb ever feel like that to you? Does it become just a routine you do? I know I've found myself there from time to time.

I love this song for the way it reminds us that we don't follow empty traditions. Behind and underneath and above and through the routines is the REAL Jesus, the REAL rescue and redemption, the REAL God waiting to speak through all the trappings of our faith.

Lord, as we wait in this time between the cross and the empty tomb, wake us up to your presence.

Reflection by Betty Berg

Week 8
Easter Week
Once for All



Resurrection, by Andrea Mantegna

Easter, Sunday Week 8, Day 1

Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Hebrews 10:11-25

¹¹ Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. ¹⁴ For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

¹⁵ The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says:

¹⁶ “This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord.

I will put my laws in their hearts,
and I will write them on their minds.”

¹⁷ Then he adds:

“Their sins and lawless acts
I will remember no more.”

¹⁸ And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary.

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Sermon Notes & Reflections

Gratitude

List at least 5 things from the previous week for which you are grateful.

Monday, Week 8, Day 1

Your Lenten practice is complete! Congratulations!

How did God meet you in your Lenten practice?

Would you like to keep going with the practice? Would you like to try something new?

Psalm 40

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.

¹ I waited patiently for the Lord;
he turned to me and heard my cry.
² He lifted me out of the slimy pit,
out of the mud and mire;
he set my feet on a rock
and gave me a firm place to stand.
³ He put a new song in my mouth,
a hymn of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear the Lord
and put their trust in him.
⁴ Blessed is the one
who trusts in the Lord,
who does not look to the proud,
to those who turn aside to false gods.
⁵ Many, Lord my God,
are the wonders you have done,
the things you planned for us.
None can compare with you;
were I to speak and tell of your deeds,
they would be too many to declare.
⁶ Sacrifice and offering you did not desire—
but my ears you have opened—
burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not
require.
⁷ Then I said, “Here I am, I have come—
it is written about me in the scroll.
⁸ I desire to do your will, my God;
your law is within my heart.”
⁹ I proclaim your saving acts in the great
assembly;

I do not seal my lips, Lord, as you know.
¹⁰ I do not hide your righteousness in my
heart;
I speak of your faithfulness and your saving
help.
I do not conceal your love and your
faithfulness from the great assembly.
¹¹ Do not withhold your mercy from me, Lord;
may your love and faithfulness always
protect me.
¹² For troubles without number surround me;
my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see.
They are more than the hairs of my head,
and my heart fails within me.
¹³ Be pleased to save me, Lord;
come quickly, Lord, to help me.
¹⁴ May all who want to take my life
be put to shame and confusion;
may all who desire my ruin
be turned back in disgrace.
¹⁵ May those who say to me, “Aha! Aha!”
be appalled at their own shame.
¹⁶ But may all who seek you
rejoice and be glad in you;
may those who long for your saving help
always say,
“The Lord is great!”
¹⁷ But as for me, I am poor and needy;
may the Lord think of me.
You are my help and my deliverer;
you are my God, do not delay.

Tuesday, Week 8, Day 3

The Season of Easter

Easter is more than just one Sunday – it is an entire season that last 50 days, from Resurrection Sunday until Pentecost Sunday. It is a joyful season, celebrating the presence of the Risen Christ in the Church. After his resurrection, Jesus spent 40 days with his disciples – up until he Ascended to the right hand of the Father. Only 10 days later, the church was transformed by the new way God is present with us – the promised coming of the Spirit on Pentecost.

The season of Easter is a time to intentionally live into this new reality – death has been defeated, and Jesus is alive! This one event, the resurrection, transforms our entire lives. It is the turning point of history, when everything changed. The old is gone, the new has come. This is not an abstract truth, but a concrete reality that reaches each moment of every day.

Easter has traditionally been a time for baptisms and renewing our commitment to Christ. If Lent is all about repentance, Easter is all about belief. It is a time to take new steps as we walk in the freedom of new life.

Are there specific areas in your life that are crying out for new life? During Lent, we were letting go of the old. Now is time to grab hold of the new.

Romans 6:3-11

³Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—⁷because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

⁸Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. ¹⁰The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

¹¹In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

A prayer for Easter (from the Book of Common Prayer)

Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of the Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by your life-giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Wednesday, Week 8, Day 4

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ²By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

³For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. ⁶After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

⁹For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. ¹¹Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

Practice: Reciting the Creeds

²³*Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. (Hebrews 10:23)*

In the first few centuries of the Christian faith, leaders in the Church developed a few different Creeds, or statements of belief. They are tools to help us affirm what we believe, guard against false teaching, and establish our identity. They give us common ground upon which to stand.

For today's practice, recite out loud the Apostles Creed.

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic* church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

**catholic = universal, the Christian church of all times and all places*

Thursday, Week 8, Day 5

1 Peter 1:17-21

¹⁷ Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. ¹⁸ For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. ²⁰ He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. ²¹ Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

Trusting in our “silver and gold” is such a temptation and is how many people live. It's a way of life that is frequently handed down from one generation to another. Certainly, we need money to put food on the table, clothes on our backs, and a roof over our heads. But it's not what redeems us (v. 18) or saves us.

Rather, Jesus redeems us. Or, as we often hear: “Jesus saves.” The phrase is almost cliché, and yet nothing is truer. It is the “precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect” that does this. The cross of Christ really is the point of redemption for us—the once for all sacrifice fulfilling the Old Covenant; and we receive that saving through faith in Jesus.

How do we know it's true? Because Jesus' heavenly father “raised him from the dead and glorified him” (v. 21). The resurrection of Jesus is the joyous clincher for our faith! It is the linchpin of the gospel that the first Christians courageously proclaimed and we still do today, as well. May you know with certainty because of Jesus' resurrection, that you are redeemed—not by silver or gold – but by God through faith in Jesus and his work on the cross!

Reflection by Brian North

Friday, Week 8, Day 6

Lectio Divina: Luke 23:13-35

¹³ Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; ¹⁶ but they were kept from recognizing him.

¹⁷ He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?”

They stood still, their faces downcast. ¹⁸ One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

¹⁹ “What things?” he asked.

“About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. ²⁰ The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; ²¹ but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. ²² In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning ²³ but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. ²⁴ Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.”

²⁵ He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

²⁸ As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. ²⁹ But they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them.

³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. ³² They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

³³ They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together ³⁴ and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” ³⁵ Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

Be Still Take a deep breath or two. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak through the Scripture.

Read What does the Scripture say? Slowly read the verses, looking for details, key words, and concepts.

Meditate Read the passage again. Imagine yourself in the passage: what do you experience, think or feel? What catches your attention? Mentally “chew” on the words and images.

Pray Read again! How does this connect with your life? Talk with God about the issues that come up. What comforts you? What challenges you? How might God be inviting you to respond?

Contemplate Read one more time. Savor being in God’s presence. Sit with Him and allow Him to search your heart. You may find that words come to mind, but maybe you just want to be quiet.

Saturday, Week 8, Day 7

On Christ the Solid Rock by Edward Mote

1 My hope is built on nothing less
than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
but wholly lean on Jesus' name.

Refrain:

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand:
all other ground is sinking sand;
all other ground is sinking sand.

2 When darkness veils his lovely face,
I rest on his unchanging grace;
in every high and stormy gale,
my anchor holds within the veil.

[Refrain]

3 His oath, his covenant, his blood,
support me in the whelming flood;
when all around my soul gives way,
he then is all my hope and stay.

[Refrain]

4 When he shall come with trumpet sound,
O may I then in him be found:
dressed in his righteousness alone,
faultless to stand before the throne.

[Refrain]

I love so many of the traditional hymns of the church because they put the truths of scripture in a musical form that helps me remember it. They worship God and teach me about Him and about myself. This one is based on Jesus' parable of the two builders, one who builds on rock and the other on sand. It reminds me that Christ's righteousness and sacrifice are the only solid foundation for my life, instead of the shifting sands with which the world and my own designs tempt me.

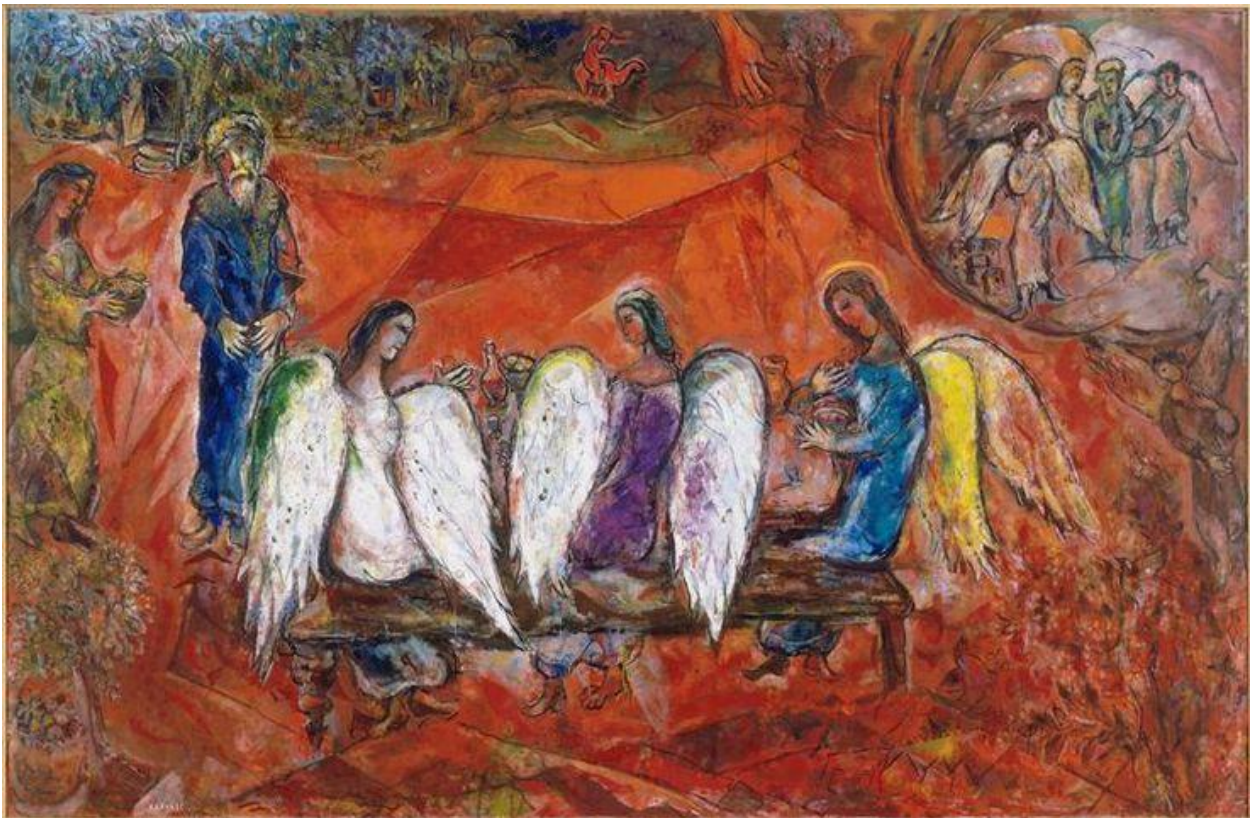
Each verse guides and encourages me further to put my trust in His foundation of grace and love, especially when I can't see Him clearly, or when storms, chaos, adversity, or my own failures lead me to doubt or to rely on some other "sweet frame."

Have you, like me, been tempted to put your trust in something other than Jesus? Is there something tempting you away from Jesus even now? Let's return to the Solid Rock so that at the sound of the trumpet we'll be found in Him, dressed in His righteousness, and standing faultless before His throne!

Reflection by Jim Peterson

Week 9

A Faith that Endures



Abraham and Three Angels, by Marc Chagall

Sunday, Week 9, Day 1

Hebrews 11:1-16

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. ²This is what the ancients were commended for.

³By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

⁴By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

⁵By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: "He could not be found, because God had taken him away." For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. ⁶And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

⁷By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. [†]By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.

⁸By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. ⁹By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. ¹¹And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. ¹²And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

¹³All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. ¹⁴People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. ¹⁵If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

Sermon Notes & Reflections

Gratitude

List at least 5 things from the previous week for which you are grateful.

Monday, Week 9, Day 2

Weekly forecast: this is a time to take stock and prepare yourself for the week ahead.

Check in: How is it with your soul?

Looking ahead to the week: what is coming up this week? Anything you are looking forward to? Anything you are wary of?

Watch out for... (what potential challenges are ahead?)

Hold onto... (what will help when facing those challenges)

Spend time in prayer about the week ahead. Consider using the words of the Psalm in your prayer.

Psalm 119:105-112

- ¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp for my feet,
a light on my path.
- ¹⁰⁶ I have taken an oath and confirmed it,
that I will follow your righteous laws.
- ¹⁰⁷ I have suffered much;
preserve my life, LORD, according to your word.
- ¹⁰⁸ Accept, LORD, the willing praise of my mouth,
and teach me your laws.
- ¹⁰⁹ Though I constantly take my life in my hands,
I will not forget your law.
- ¹¹⁰ The wicked have set a snare for me,
but I have not strayed from your precepts.
- ¹¹¹ Your statutes are my heritage forever;
they are the joy of my heart.
- ¹¹² My heart is set on keeping your decrees
to the very end.

Tuesday, Week 9, Day 3

Romans 4:18-25

¹⁸Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” ¹⁹Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. ²⁰Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, ²¹being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. ²²This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” ²³The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, ²⁴but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. ²⁵He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

As one who went to live amongst another people as a witness to faith & trust in Jesus’ death & resurrection, I know that there are people everywhere in the world looking for the true God and a life that agrees with righteousness and goodness we experience when living faithfully.

One Japanese brother came to Jesus in the late 60’s when he realized his godless communist faith was emptiness. He was hungering for goodness that was not known in his family life nor in his compatriots. A Japanese female fellow student at the UW who grew up in a Buddhist priest family saw love lived out by Christians, so she followed her sister to faith in Jesus. Then she had to face down her cousin, a powerful priest, as he demonstrated all kinds of demonic powers to show her how powerless Jesus was to protect her. She never wavered in that temple nor in her family gatherings. Thrown out of the family for decades, she was later brought back in because of her consistent love and witness to her family.

An Indian young man who worshipped in Rose Hill for several months knew in his teen years that beating his head on the floor of a Hindu temple and endlessly chanting meaningless words was not true goodness nor righteousness. A godly coach in California showed him a way to Jesus and his life went down a new path of living rightly.

These 3 are just a few of the many who were waiting to find what they sought in a God they believed must exist, but hadn’t yet found. None can come to faith except those drawn by our Creator God. Praise the Lord that the Holy Spirit is searching constantly for them and bringing us close to them.

We do not know now how the Holy Spirit uses us every day to draw others to faith in Jesus just as we were drawn to Him. Let’s daily give thanks for each godly interaction with others who will surprise us in heaven!!

Reflection by Kurt Thompson

Wednesday, Week 9, Day 4

Practice: Encouragement

²⁴And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Today's practice is a simple one: encourage others in their life of faith.

Take a few moments to prayerfully think of the people in your life – who could use a little extra support right now? Who is going through a hard time? Who have you seen putting their faith into action? Who has stepped out into a new endeavor? Who might need to know that they are not alone as they seek to follow Christ?

Pick one or two of those people who come to mind, and do two things for them:

First, pray for them! Bring them before the Lord and ask the Spirit to help you encourage them. Maybe a verse or picture or song comes to mind. What might God be giving you to give to them?

Second, reach out to them. This could be in a call, a card, or a text. If anything specific came up in your prayers for them, let them know. What words might spur them on to love and good deeds? Let them know you are praying for them.

Bonus challenge: get together with someone and spend time talking about life – go past the surface. What has been on their heart and mind lately?

Thursday, Week 9, Day 5

Hebrews 11:17-31

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, ¹⁸ even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” ¹⁹ Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.

²⁰ By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.

²¹ By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph’s sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

²² By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones.

²³ By faith Moses’ parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king’s edict.

²⁴ By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. ²⁵ He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. ²⁶ He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. ²⁷ By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king’s anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. ²⁸ By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

²⁹ By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.

³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days.

³¹ By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.

Faith is believing God - not believing IN God, but acting like what He says is true even when we can’t reconcile that with our earthly sight. Even when it’s hard. Action is integral to faith.

- Noah built
- Abram went
- Abraham willingly offered
- Joseph spoke about the Exodus
- Moses led, Egyptians drowned, Israelites witnessed
- Jericho fell
- Rahab joined the Messianic line
- Martyrs suffer

Who has been a hero of the faith for you? My heroes include people who saw the same earthly evidence and were unfazed rather than discouraged; they believed the promises of the One who holds all circumstances – even impossible-looking ones – in His hands.

Get to know God through reading and studying His word. Hold on to the promises He gives and His examples of past faithfulness – both on the pages of the Bible and on the pages of your life.

Dear God, thank You for being perfectly faithful and for choreographing the circumstances of my life for my best. And thank You for the gift of faith (Ephesians 2:8-10). Amen

Reflection by Jeanne Harshbarger

Friday, Week 9, Day 6

Lectio Divina

James 2:14-26

¹⁴What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? ¹⁵Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

¹⁸But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.”

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. ¹⁹You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

²⁰You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? ²¹Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²²You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. ²³And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. ²⁴You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

²⁵In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? ²⁶As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

Be Still

Take a deep breath or two. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak through the Scripture.

Read

What does the Scripture say? Slowly read the verses, looking for details, key words, and concepts.

Meditate

Read the passage again. Imagine yourself in the passage: what do you experience, think or feel? What catches your attention? Mentally “chew” on the words and images.

Pray

Read again! How does this connect with your life? Talk with God about the issues that come up. What comforts you? What challenges you? How might God be inviting you to respond?

Contemplate

Read one more time. Savor being in God’s presence. Sit with Him and allow Him to search your heart. You may find that words come to mind, but maybe you just want to be quiet. Take as much time as you need.

Saturday, Week 9, Day 7

Take my life and Let it Be by Frances Ridley Havergal

1 Take my life and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to thee.
Take my moments and my days;
let them flow in endless praise,
let them flow in endless praise.

2 Take my hands and let them move
at the impulse of thy love.
Take my feet and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee,
swift and beautiful for thee.

3 Take my voice and let me sing
always, only, for my King.
Take my lips and let them be
filled with messages from thee,
filled with messages from thee.

4 Take my silver and my gold;
not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect and use
every power as thou shalt choose,
every power as thou shalt choose.

5 Take my will and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne,
it shall be thy royal throne.

6 Take my love; my Lord, I pour
at thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for thee,
ever, only, all for thee.

Have you ever found yourself singing a song that you've known for a long time, but realize, at just that moment, that you've never really thought about the words? Oh, maybe the chorus is what has always stood out to you or a particular bit of melody? But then, the words sink in deep for the first time and you are amazed at how appropriate they are. They hit you in the heart. They strengthen your faith. They encourage you. And then you find yourself thinking about the person who wrote the hymn or song. What were they going through when they wrote those lyrics? What life events were they going through?

When we consider the scriptures and read about the faith of Abraham, of Noah, of Joseph, of Moses, we think of their lives, of what they went through, of what God called them to do. To leave their homes, to build an ark and prepare for an unimaginable destructive event, or to lead God's people out of Egypt. When the Lord calls us to lead, to move, to change, to surrender, or even to endure something difficult, how do we react?

When we find our faith tested, when life hits hard and we are going through trials, that's when we find ourselves listening to the message of the songs and sermons. This hymn to the Lord offers up our will, our hands, our feet, our voice, our resources, our love. "Take my life, Lord." When you sing these words, think about what they are saying, about your own faith. Can you say, "Take my life, ever, only, all for Thee"?

Reflection by Barbara Norfleet

Week 10

Run the Race



Runners, by Ariella Charny

Sunday, Week 10, Day 1

Hebrews 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. 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. ³Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Sermon Notes & Reflections

Gratitude

List at least 5 things from the previous week for which you are grateful.

Monday, Week 10, Day 2

Weekly forecast: this is a time to take stock and prepare yourself for the week ahead.

Check in: How is it with your soul?

Looking ahead to the week: what is coming up this week? Anything you are looking forward to?
Anything you are wary of?

Watch out for... (what potential challenges are ahead?)

Hold onto... (what will help when facing those challenges)

Spend time in prayer about the week ahead. Consider using the words of the Psalm in your prayer.

Psalm 118:1-7

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

²Let Israel say:

“His love endures forever.”

³Let the house of Aaron say:

“His love endures forever.”

⁴Let those who fear the Lord say:

“His love endures forever.”

⁵When hard pressed, I cried to the Lord;
he brought me into a spacious place.

⁶The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid.

What can mere mortals do to me?

⁷The Lord is with me; he is my helper.

I look in triumph on my enemies.

Tuesday, Week 10, Day 3

1 Peter 1:3-9

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Recently, I was listening to an interview with John Mark Comer (author of *Practicing the Way*)*. In it he talked about how we are formed: how the ways we live our lives shape us into a certain kind of person, like the lines of our faces being etched into place one scowl or laugh at a time, over and over again, until we become a kind of permanent scowl or permanent radiant joy. He noted that the thing that forms us the most is how we respond to suffering. Trials will come, big and small. Do we see them as an opportunity to partner with Christ in his self-sacrificial love?

The only way to resurrection is through the cross – this is the shape of our faith. We follow Jesus, who was crucified, died, and buried, and then raised to new life. So it's no surprise that we become more and more like Christ as we too follow that same pattern. We can have joy in trials because we know that we join our great high priest in a life shaped after his. We can learn to face trials like Jesus did – be they as small as the interruptions of our plans or as large as facing great pain with “thy will be done”. This is the refining process. What will the end result of our souls be like?

What trials are you facing today? Let them be an invitation to fix our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. Consent to embracing them as part of your journey of faith. Let them refine and prove you like gold.

Reflection by Betty Berg

*The full interview can be found on The Intentional Parents Podcast, *Spiritual Formation & Motherhood: Interview with John Mark Comer at the Intentional Motherhood Retreat*, aired 2/3/26. It's 45 minutes long, and totally worth the listen (whether you are a mom or not!). Found wherever you get podcasts and on YouTube.

Wednesday, Week 10, Day 4

Lectio Divina

Psalm 118:19-29

¹⁵ Shouts of joy and victory
resound in the tents of the righteous:
“The Lord’s right hand has done mighty
things!
¹⁶ The Lord’s right hand is lifted high;
the Lord’s right hand has done mighty
things!”
¹⁷ I will not die but live,
and will proclaim what the Lord has done.
¹⁸ The Lord has chastened me severely,
but he has not given me over to death.
¹⁹ Open for me the gates of the righteous;
I will enter and give thanks to the Lord.
²⁰ This is the gate of the Lord
through which the righteous may enter.
²¹ I will give you thanks, for you answered me;
you have become my salvation.
²² The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;

²³ the Lord has done this,
and it is marvelous in our eyes.
²⁴ The Lord has done it this very day;
let us rejoice today and be glad.
²⁵ Lord, save us!
Lord, grant us success!
²⁶ Blessed is he who comes in the name of
the Lord.
From the house of the Lord we bless you.
²⁷ The Lord is God,
and he has made his light shine on us.
With boughs in hand, join in the festal
procession up to the horns of the altar.
²⁸ You are my God, and I will praise you;
you are my God, and I will exalt you.
²⁹ Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

Be Still

Take a deep breath or two. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak through the Scripture.

Read

What does the Scripture say? Slowly read the verses, looking for details, key words, and concepts.

Meditate

Read the passage again. Imagine yourself in the passage: what do you experience, think or feel? What catches your attention? Mentally “chew” on the words and images.

Pray

Read again! How does this connect with your life? Talk with God about the issues that come up. What comforts you? What challenges you? How might God be inviting you to respond?

Contemplate

Read one more time. Savor being in God’s presence. Sit with Him and allow Him to search your heart. You may find that words come to mind, but maybe you just want to be quiet. Take as much time as you need.

Thursday, Week 10, Day 5

Philippians 3:7-14

⁷ But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

¹² Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

What do you consider some of your most significant accomplishments in life? Our achievements often bring pride and joy, and they are genuine blessings. We work hard to make progress, reach goals, and complete meaningful tasks throughout our lives. Yet the pursuit of these “prizes” can also exhaust us and wear us down, even as we add them to our personal repertoire of success.

Paul reminds us that, in light of Christ, there is no greater goal than knowing Him. He goes so far as to call his greatest achievements a loss compared to the surpassing worth of Christ. What a striking truth. Faith in Christ is the most important decision we will ever make—the defining lifestyle, the gravitational center, and the transformative journey of our lives. Nothing compares to knowing Christ, not even our greatest accomplishments. The ultimate life is found in pressing on to take hold of Christ, cherishing Him above all else. Nothing compares with faith.

What would it practically look like in this season of my life to “know Christ” more deeply—sharing in His life, His sufferings, and His power—rather than merely striving for the next achievement or milestone?

Lord Jesus,

Thank You for the gifts and accomplishments in my life. Help me to hold them loosely and treasure Christ Jesus above all else. Re-center my heart so that knowing You matters more than success or recognition. Give me grace to press on toward the life found in Christ alone. You are my everything - it is all a loss compared to You!

Reflection by Gwen North

Friday, Week 10, Day 6

In Christ Alone by Keith Getty & Stuart Townsend

1 In Christ alone my hope is found;
He is my light, my strength, my song;
this Cornerstone, this solid ground,
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease;
my Comforter, my All in All;
here in the love of Christ I stand.

2 In Christ alone who took on flesh;
fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness
scorned by the ones He came to save;
'til on that cross as Jesus died
the wrath of God was satisfied;
for ev'ry sin on Him was laid;
here in the death of Christ I live.

3 There in the ground His body lay;
Light of the world by darkness slain.
Then bursting forth in glorious day,
up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory,
sin's curse has lost its grip on me;
for I am His and He is mine,
bought with the precious blood of Christ!

4 No guilt in life, no fear in death;
this is the pow'r of Christ in me.
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man
can ever pluck me from His hand;
'til He returns or calls me home,
here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand!

This is one of my favorite songs. Basically, because it presents the core of the Gospel. My hope is found in Jesus alone. He is my light. He is my strength. He is my Comforter. He truly is my all in all.

I live in the death of Christ. Because He rose from the grave, sin has lost its grip on me. I was bought with His precious blood. My destiny is in His hands. He is the one I trust more than anyone or anything else. What confidence comes from knowing that nothing can pluck me from His hand.

As I traveled the world during my 35 years serving with Wycliffe Bible Translators, I found my self in several challenging situations. Yet, I had amazing peace through each one. He was in control. I had no power on my own. I stood alone in the power of Christ.

Which phrases from this song help you stand strong in the face of challenges?

Reflection by Dave Cram

Saturday, Week 10, Day 7

Congratulations, you have reached the finish line for this devotional! Today, we'll spend some time looking back and looking ahead.

Take a few minutes to look back at the start of this journey – especially at pages 5, where you spent time reflecting on your life. How are you doing now, 10 weeks later? What has shifted? What remains the same?

What stands out to you from these past 10 weeks? Did any key themes or verses or songs come up for you? Did you find any practices that you want to keep doing? Were there any that weren't great fits for you? Did you notice anything about yourself (patterns, reactions, etc.)?

What is one way that God met you over the past 10 weeks? Offer thanks!

Benediction

May these verses be a prayer to carry you out into what comes next.

²⁰Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, ²¹equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20-21)

**Thank you to the
“great cloud of witnesses”
who contributed!**