

Restored Through Sacrifice



LENT 2019 A Consecration Guide

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What is Lent?

Lent is the 40 day period prior to Easter, and it represents the 40 Days that Jesus was in the wilderness when he endured temptation by Satan. The period is also symbolic of Jesus' long journey to the cross. It gives believers an opportunity to set worldly cares aside and, through personal self denial and self examination, identify (and be identified with) the experience of Jesus. As we set self aside, we walk with Jesus. If we walk with Jesus to the cross, we will also be able to fully celebrate being raised with Him at Resurrection.

The number of "40 days" does not include Sundays, because Sundays are by definition celebrations of the Resurrection (Mark 16:2, Acts 20:7). The days in the wilderness were Jesus' time of preparation for ministry. During the Lenten Season we spend our time journeying with Jesus, and experiencing the transformative power of sacrifice in our lives.

The Lenten Season is a wonderful opportunity for us to grow spiritually. We are encouraging the members of Mt. Pisgah to focus on this being "The Year of Restoration" from our Episcopal District Theme, from Joel 2:18-25. We sacrifice during this season so that God may do a work of renovation and restoration in us. We want God to restore us to God's design and destiny for our lives. Though that design has been degraded through the existence of sin in our lives and in the world, God is an expert restorer. God can "refinish" us so that we can once again reflect God's image and glory. When Resurrection Sunday comes, we each want to be able to celebrate the inner restoration that has taken place, and to manifest it in our outward behavior.

How will the believer consecrate him(her)self during Lent?

A. Prayer and Meditation : The most important element of Lent is SEEKING the Lord. Many people sacrifice and deny themselves of things WITHOUT seeking the Lord (i.e., just "giving up something" for Lent). THIS IS USELESS. God wants us to SEEK HIM (Luke 11:9, James 4:8). Prayer is TWO-WAY communication. We ask You to do the following during lent:

1. Establish a quiet time each day (at least 15 minutes). Have your meditation at the same time each day (it can be morning, noon, or evening). Pray, read the daily scripture. Recite the prayer. Spend some moments of reflection. Perhaps keep a journal and write your thoughts. Close in prayer.
2. Participate in our **Episcopal District's Prayer Conference Call** every **Monday at 6 a.m.** A brief reflection will be given, then prayer will begin. The Conference Call dial in number is **(712) 775-7031**. The **Access Code is 658 487 982#**.
3. Join the **Mt. Pisgah Prayer Conference Call** every Monday at **8:30 p.m.** and pray with brothers and sisters from this local body of Christ and beyond. The Conference Call dial in number is **(641) 715-3580**. The Access Code is **316 885#**

B. Self-Examination: After listening to God, it's time to look at YOU. This must be an honest, searching look that uses God's Word (not our preferences) for evaluation. (2 Cor. 13:5-6)

C. Repentance: We must be WILLING to walk a new way. True repentance involves (a) a sense of sorrow for sin (Psalm 51:4-10), (b) An appreciation of God's mercy in Christ (Psalm 130:4), (c) A hatred of sin (Psalm 119:128), (d) willingness to do what it takes to avoid sin (Matthew 5:27-30)

D. Purposeful Self Denial / Fasting: We are once again asking the members of Mt. Pisgah to FAST during this period.

1. What is Fasting?
 - a) Biblical fasting is refraining from food for a spiritual purpose. The point of fasting is to apply the time and attention that you would give to eating to activities that will make your relationship with God more intimate (i.e., prayer, Bible Study, meditation, Spirit led service).
 - b) Fasting is a way to conquer the physical and open the door to the supernatural in your life.
 - c) Scripture readings: Esther 4:16, Daniel 10:3, Jonah 3:5, Matthew 4:2 (Jesus fasted), Matthew 6:16-18
 - d) Scripture References for Corporate Fasting: 1 Samuel 7:5-6; Ezra 8:21-23; Nehemiah 9:1-3; Joel 2:15-16; Jonah 3:5-10; Acts 27:33-37
2. During Lent, we will primarily focus on **The Daniel Fast**. However there are other options for those who are either on medication or do not feel

capable of doing a full 40 day Daniel Fast.

Options for The Daniel Fast

- The 40 Day Daniel Fast (see section entitled Daniel Fast Guidelines)
- The 20 Day Daniel Fast: Same as above, but for 20 days, with some other form of sacrifice for the other 20 days during Lent.
- The Team Fast – A Daniel Fast in which 3-6 people team up, and each person chooses days of the week to fast. (note, a team must cover all six fasting days)

Other Types of Fasts

- Partial Fast: A fast of any type from 6 a. m. to 6 p. m.
 - A Fast that eliminates sweets, including candy, cookies, soda, and desserts
 - A non-food-related Fast, such as avoiding television or social media during Lent. Consider anything that would change your routine so that you can focus more on God
3. Start with a clear personal goal, such as a need for direction, healing, financial breakthrough, and/or restoration of relationship. Commit to the church's collective goals. Prepare spiritually by confessing your sins to God and asking forgiveness.
 4. Pray often!
 5. Do not be too legalistic! The point is not to show how strong or dedicated you are, but to increase your dependence on God and to give you a way to prioritize God in your life. If you blow it, just continue where you left off and keep trying! Conquering the flesh is difficult, but God will give you the strength if you faint not!!
 6. Please keep in mind that fasting is designed to be a sacrifice. If it is not a challenge, it does not require faith, and thus is not really fasting.

Food Guideline for a Daniel Fast

Foods You May Eat

Whole Grains: Brown Rice, Oats, Barley

Legumes: All peas, lentils, and beans

Fruits: Apples, Apricots, Bananas, Blackberries, Blueberries, Boysenberries, Cantaloupe, Cherries, Cranberries, Oats, Figs, Grapefruit, Grapes, Guava, Honeydew Melon, Kiwi, Lemons, Limes, Mangoes, Nectarines, Papayas, Peaches, Pears, Pineapples, Plums, Prunes, Raisins, Raspberries, Strawberries, Tangelos, Tangerines, Watermelon

Vegetables: Artichokes, Asparagus, Beets, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Chili Peppers, Corn, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Garlic, Gingerroot, Kale, Leeks, Lettuce, Mushrooms, Mustard Greens, Okra, Onions, Parsley, Potatoes, Radishes, Rutabagas, Scallions, Spinach, Sprouts, Squashes, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatoes, Turnips, Watercress, Yams, Zucchini, Veggie burgers

Liquids: Spring Water, Distilled Water, 100% All-Natural Fruit Juices, 100% All Natural Vegetable Juices. You may also drink protein drinks. (In all, please read labels and watch for added sugar)

Others: Seeds, Nuts, Sprouts

Foods to Avoid

Meat, White Rice, Fried Foods, Caffeine, Carbonated Beverages, Foods Containing Preservatives or Additives, Dairy, Refined Sugar, Sugar Substitutes, Honey, Syrup, White Flour and All Products Using It, Margarine, Shortening, High Fat Products

Lenten Reflections

These scriptures are lifted from our daily Church School readings for the Lenten period in our church school book: The Standard Lesson Commentary. The prayers are original, except for the Sunday prayers (which come from the commentary book). Please read and reflect on the scriptures and say the prayers aloud in your quiet time with the Lord. You will have the opportunity for additional insights on them on Sunday Mornings in Church School.

Day 1: Ash Wednesday, March 6, 2019

Answering the Lord's Call

Read Mark 4:10-20

Almighty and Merciful God: As I begin our sacrificial journey with you Jesus, I praise You that You have placed within me the key that will unlock the secrets of restoration: the Power of Your Spirit working within me. I pray that I might cooperate with the leadings and promptings of Your Spirit. When I let You have Your way, You "till the soil" in my heart and make it good, productive ground for the planting of Your Word. I commit to not allowing distractions to interfere with Your harvesting process. A restored "me" is on the way! In Jesus' Name, AMEN

Day 2: Thursday, March 7, 2019

The Father Honors Those Who Follow

Read John 12:20-26

Precious Lord: I realize that only through sacrifice (giving my whole self back to You) can my life really make a difference. I see so many who spend their entire lives and expend so much time, energy, and money trying to protect what they have. If I really want to see You work in my life, it's time for me to open my hands and release what I have into Your hands. You gave it to me, You know why You did, and You know what it's best uses are. I praise You for establishing the direction for my life – I will follow Your lead. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Day 3: Friday, March 8, 2017

Suffering and Knowing Christ Jesus

Read Philippians 3:7-16

Dear Jesus: I have come to realize that there is NOTHING in this world more valuable than knowing You, and enjoying an ever growing relationship with You. I place everything that I have learned, earned and achieved in my life to be directed toward enhancing my relationship with You. I also want every problem, pain, and setback that I experience to further the cause of demonstrating Your glory. Even in all of my struggles, issues and drama, use me to help tell Your story and bring Your Name praise. It's all for You. In Jesus Mighty Name, Amen.

Day 4: Saturday, March 9, 2019

Faithful Witness in Suffering

Read 2 Corinthians 6:1-10

Dear Lord: As I sacrifice for You during this Lenten Season, I recognize that there is no guarantee that making sacrifices for You will mean that I will feel appreciated. In fact, I will more likely be questioned and criticized. In spite of the negativity around me, and even the discomfort within me, help me to always keep a praise on my lips and a positive attitude. You are building something within me that I may not see yet, but is promised with the certainty of Your Word. Seasons of sacrifice will yield dividends! In Jesus Mighty Name, Amen!

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| CELEBRATION SUNDAY 1: March 10, 2019 |
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Called To Sacrifice

Read Mark 1:16-20; Luke 14:25-33

Almighty God: May we acknowledge Your rule in our lives to the extent that we submit fully to Your Son. Strengthen us in the way of the cross, even as we thank You for eternal life that awaits. We pray this in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Day 5: Monday, March 11, 2019

Transformed by Christ

Read Ephesians 2:1-10

Merciful God: I honor You today and I give You praise, because You found me broken down on the road of life and placed me on the road to glory. There is nothing that I can take credit for, and nothing that I can use as a reason to look down on other people – You found me when I was lost and rescued me. As I do the works that You have created me to do, the same grace that saved me will do the work to restore me to the vision that You have for my life. I will always give You the praise. I will always give You the credit. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Day 6: Tuesday, March 12, 2019

God Seeks The Scattered

Read Ezekiel 34:11-16

Loving God: I will forever be grateful that You search for us when we are wandering far from You. There are so many things that "scatter us" – discouragement, church hurt, broken relationships, money problems and so many other "wolves" that cause us to wander away from the fold. Yet, you never gave up on me. Help me to remember that You are a God who searches for the lost and brings them home, no matter what drove them away. May my words, thoughts and actions never be aligned with the wolves, but only with the Shepherd. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Day 7: Wednesday, March 13, 2019

God's Compassion

Read Hosea 11:1-4, 8, 9

Compassionate God: I am grateful that You that are so compassionate and forgiving. Even when I was stuck in my Egypt, caught up in something that I had gotten myself into that I couldn't find my way out of, You came and set me free. When you deliver us from our insanity, you do so with "cords of kindness," not with condemnation, guilt and shame. Help me to use those same "cords" to draw someone else out of the traps that keep them bound in the enemy's traps. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Day 8: Thursday, March 14, 2017

Calling Sinners To Repent

Read Luke 3:12, 13; 5:27-32

Dear Jesus: I realize that the call to Your discipleship is a call to change my behavior. I ask that you show me the areas of my life that need to be changed. I make a conscious decision today repent of (turn from) the ways in which I have made people feel "less than" or used peoples' difficulties to advance my own position. Help me to turn from negative behavior, AND to avoid the involvements that lead to it. I ask this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Day 9: Friday, March 15, 2019

Lost Sheep, Lost Coin

Read Luke 15:1-10

Lord Jesus: You see value in people that no one else sees. I thank you that when others might have given up on us, You found us to be valuable enough to drop everything, sacrifice Your glory in Heaven, and come to earth on a rescue mission on our behalf. Thank You for being persistent enough to find us in the places where in our insecurities we hide ourselves – even behind fortresses like toughness, "hardness," bravado and aggressiveness. You know just where to look and can bring us out. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Day 10: Saturday, March 16, 2019

Understanding and Recognition

Read Luke 15:25-32

Almighty God: How easy it is for us to forget how much it meant to us to receive unconditional acceptance from You when we finally heard and responded to your call to salvation and transformation! As people come to the church with needs of all kinds, help me not to judge them based on the mistakes they've made or what they've done with their lives. When You decide to bless someone or draw someone home, give me the heart to be genuinely excited regardless of their station in life. I recognize there are folks that AREN'T completely excited when You bless me – give me the sensitivity not

to be one of the “haters,” but rather one of the “celebraters” in someone else’s life. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

CELEBRATION SUNDAY 2: MARCH 17, 2019

Called To Return

Read: Luke 15:11-24

Father: We thank You for Your Mercy! May we join in Your joyous celebration as others become reconciled to You. Teach us to express that joy as we treat others with the grace and mercy You granted to us. We pray in Jesus’ Name, AMEN.

Day 11: Monday, March 18, 2019

Laws of Confession and Restitution

Read Exodus 22:1-3; Numbers 5:5-7

O God of Justice: I thank you for the example of the Israelite community, and while in this day of grace we are not bound to observe the specifics of their laws, you have given within them timeless principles about right and wrong. You are a God who requires honesty and integrity. If I unjustly deprive my neighbor of something that is rightfully theirs (whether it is something material, financial, or something intangible such as appreciation, affection, peace or due honor) help me to acknowledge it and do my best to make it right. Help me to do it without complaining, and to do everything in my power to restore what may have been damaged in the relationship. It’s not about me, but it’s about You. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Day 12: Tuesday, March 19, 2019

Israel’s Commitment

Read Deuteronomy 26:16-19

Dear Lord: I appreciate the fact that You are calling me to a life of obedience and faithfulness to Your will and Your ways. Even though I sometimes THINK that I know what’s best for me, I believe today that You have a higher view. I may not understand some of the things that You are requiring me to do in any given moment, but I recognize that the greatness that is within me can only be unlocked through subjection of my ways and submission to Yours. I yield to Your Spirit’s direction today. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Day 13: Wednesday, March 20, 2019

I Must Proclaim The Good News!

Read Luke 4:38-43

Dear Jesus: I praise You for setting me free from my sins, for healing me time and time again, and for answering my prayers. However help me to remember that you have not done all of that for me “just FOR ME.” You have blessed me to be a blessing. I

pray that I might not contain You by focusing on the favor that you have shown me, but that when Your Spirit prompts me, I might talk about Your love to people from “other towns,” outside of my immediate churchy comfort zone. There are folks all around me that know about (and sometimes don’t like) church but DON’T know YOU. I must share You with them. Help me to get out of my nest. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Day 14: Thursday, March 21, 2019

Let the Children Come to Me

Read Luke 18:15-17

Dear Lord: Today I pray for children all over the world. So many have been victimized by those who were supposed to safeguard them, and even by those purporting to represent You. Many have internalized adult sized corruptions far too early in life. I pray that I might demonstrate Your pure, uncomplicated and unconditional love to every child and every young person in my sphere of influence, so that they may know that You are real and that You care about them. I pray also that I might come before YOU as a child – to suspend my assumptions daily and allow You to teach me all that I need to know for today. I ask this in Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Day 15: Friday, March 22, 2019

Entering The Kingdom of God

Read Luke 18:18-30

Dear Lord: I realize that there are things in this world that we all hold in high value. For many it is money and possessions. For others it is family, or careers, or relationships. All of these things You have provided and we are to enjoy. However I must guard against the tendency to allow these things to occupy a place in my heart that is reserved for You alone. Help me to ensure that knowing You and pursuing Your will for my life remains my number one priority. Help me to prioritize prayer, studying Your Word, worship, and spending time with You and Your people so that what’s most important doesn’t get crowded out by the need to grasp the “things” that this world has to offer. More love to Thee, O Christ!! In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Day 16: Saturday, March 23, 2019

Blind Man Blessed

Read Luke 18:35-43

Dear Jesus: Thank You for opening my eyes so I could see that You are my way to salvation. Lord, today I’m asking You to show me other areas in my life where there is blindness – blindness to the needs of others, blindness to my own biases and attitudes about people and situations, blindness to my own brokenness. In these areas Lord I boldly cry out, “I WANT TO SEE!” I want to see how I can be a more obedient disciple! I want to see how I can be more sensitive to the leading of Your Spirit! I want to see more clearly the needs in my church and community and how I can help meet

them. I'm not concerned about what other disciples say – I want to see! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

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| CELEBRATION SUNDAY 3: MARCH 24, 2019 |
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Called To Repent

Read: Luke 19:1-10

Father: We are helpless on our own. Grateful for your incomparable gift, we ask that Your Spirit empower us to reflect Your grace in every part of our lives. We pray this in Jesus' Name. Amen!

Day 17: Monday, March 25, 2019**Jethro Hears of Deliverance**

Read Exodus 18:1-9

Almighty God: I thank You that deliverance is "public domain." As You break the chains of bondage in one person's life, that deliverance can let others know that they too can be delivered. Although my breakthrough may not be on the 6 o'clock news, there are people in all of our lives that are impacted when we are set free from our issues and encumbrances. When You heal me, You impact my family. When You bless our church, You speak to the surrounding community. I pray that something that You do for me today gives hope to someone who needs a change made in their lives. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Day 18: Tuesday, March 26, 2019**Sustained by God**

Read Deuteronomy 8:1-11

Dear Lord: I am so grateful that You are a sustainer. To be truthful, I haven't always been the perfect disciple. Sometimes my obedience "ebbs and flows." But through it all, You have never ceased to take care of me. Even during times when I was clearly walking in opposition to Your will, You provided for me. I pray that today and going forward I might never take Your love for granted, but always try to give You my utmost, my all, knowing that You are my safety net. I can rest in the knowledge that You are in the background, supplying my needs as I do Your will. Thank You for blessed assurance! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Day 19: Wednesday, March 27, 2019**God Speaks to Disciples**

Read Luke 9:28-36

Dear Lord: I praise You for the times when Your glory is evident – in times of worship and high praise, in times of deep meditation, in times of quiet reflection. Often we don't want to come down from these mountaintop moments. We want to

capture them and program them so that we can make them happen when WE want them to. But Your purpose in those moments is not only to make us feel special, but to reveal something about Yourself so that we can know how to walk from there. Father, help me to SEE JESUS in those moments, and LISTEN TO HIM – to hear that which he wants to tell me about my life. Then let me walk from there with a determination to keep what was said in my heart, and to obey it. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Day 20: Thursday, March 28, 2019

Well Pleased

Read Matthew 3:11-17

Almighty God: My sole desire, and my soul's desire, is to be pleasing in Your sight. I realize today that the only way that I can truly please You, is to have faith in and follow the One with whom You are already pleased – Jesus Christ. Nothing that I can do in my own strength will be sufficient – Your pleasure in me comes to the extent that I trust Jesus in every area of my life, and that I am immersed (baptized) by Him in Your Holy Spirit. Immerse me Lord, so that I can love as Jesus loved. Immerse me Lord, so that I can serve even in opposition and amid resistance. Immerse me Lord, so that there's no more "me", but only You living through me. Then and only then will You be "well pleased" in the way I live. I ask this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Day 21: Friday, March 29, 2019

Tempted in the Wilderness

Read Matthew 4:1-11

Lord of The Journey: I realize that as I attempt to respond to the call to follow you I will be tempted in every way not to do so with my whole heart. The enemy of our souls always seems to know the buttons to push that will cause me to react and stray from the path of discipleship. I reject the appeal of the voices that say "just a little bit won't hurt" and "it doesn't take all of that" and "everybody else does it this way." If I am to follow Your leading, I must learn to discern Your voice and differentiate it from the voices of redirection and distraction. I am YOUR disciple, and You have a unique path and calling for my life. Help me to remember that You will provide angelic assistance along the way. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Day 22: Saturday, March 30, 2019

Good News and Healing

Read Matthew 4:23-25

Mighty Lord Jesus: As I read this passage it occurs to me that you didn't have the benefit of Christian radio, The WORD Network, CNN or MSNBC. News of You spread throughout the known world because people were getting their needs met. Help me to remember that You use healed people to reach and heal other people. Our personal testimonies of deliverance and healing are Your PR instruments. As we

WALK in deliverance and healing, I pray that some "gossip" might spread that says You are still in the healing and deliverance business. People will respond as they see authentic, living testimonies in front of them. Use me today to let someone know that You are real. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

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| CELEBRATION SUNDAY 4: MARCH 31, 2019 |
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Called To FollowRead: Matthew 4:12-22

Father: Strengthen us to follow Your Son without reserve. Give us ears to hear His call and a willingness to follow him no matter the cost. We pray this in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Day 23: Monday, April 1, 2019**Jeremiah, Prophet to the Nations**Read Jeremiah 1:4-10

Almighty God: You have known me since before the foundations of the world. You knew what my name would be and where I would live. You knew what I would go through in my life and what my circumstances would be. You knew about all of my strengths and weaknesses, my gifts and abilities. Even with all of that mixed together, You have called me to do a work for you, like you have called everyone in the Body of Christ. Help me not to use my age, shortcomings, fears, or the projected response of others as reasons not to respond to Your call. As I open my mouth, fill it with Your words. As I reach out my hand, empower it with Your strength. I offer myself to do what You want done. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Day 24: Tuesday, April 2, 2019**Ananias Welcomes and Baptizes Saul** Read Acts 9:10-19

Lord Jesus: I believe that You are sovereign. You can convert the coldest heart into one that is aflame with passion for You. You can take problematic people and turn them into devoted disciples. Yet I recognize that my own negative experiences with certain people may cause me to hesitate when Your Spirit prompts me to minister to them. Help me not to allow my personal biases keep me from reaching out in obedience with Your love. You are a God of forgiveness and redemption. You have redeemed *me* and put me to use in spite of the negativity in *my* past. Help me to "get over myself" and believe that You can do the same with others. Use me to bless someone in spite of my "hang ups." In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Day 25: Wednesday, April 3, 2019**Paul Called by a Vision**Read Acts 16:6-10

Dear Lord: You are a God who sits high and looks low. You are Lord of the entire universe, yet You hear the cries of every soul that is in need. We Your servants have the blessed privilege to be Your instruments of response – those who you call and position to meet those needs. Help us not to be so tied to our own plans and agenda that we cannot respond when You want to reposition us to minister to someone. Sometimes You reposition us through obstacles, problems and unforeseen changes in our own circumstances. When you are “repositioning me”, help me not to fuss and complain, but to seek You to find out what You want me to do, who You want me to bless, and how You want me to minister. We are Your hands and feet, and our lives may be the only Bible some people read. I offer myself as Your vessel today. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Day 26: Thursday, April 4, 2019

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve

Read Mark 6:7-13

Lord Jesus: How we love to spend time with You, in close fellowship where we can experience Your love and wisdom. We also love those times in worship when we can “get our praise on” and rejoice with Your people. However, eventually You call us to GO – You send us forth empowered by what we have learned and experienced, to impact the lives of hurting people. Help us to know when it’s time for us to step out on faith – to get outside of the comforts of the familiar. Help us also to simplify our lives and not be so weighed down with unnecessary baggage (our “stuff”) that causes us to be too internally focused to minister to others. When we focus on doing Your will, You will supply our needs and give us authority and favor for effectiveness. We will go where You send us. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Day 27: Friday, April 5, 2019

A Great Harvest but Few Workers

Read Matthew 9:35-38

Lord of The Harvest: As we read, hear and see the news we often just shake our heads at the insanity all around us. We get angry at those responsible for perpetrating horrific crimes on a seemingly nonstop basis. Help us to remember who the real enemy is. The one who is “harassing” the crowds is Satan, working through institutions of evil such as sin, greed, racism, sexism, poverty and injustice. The adversary seems so overwhelming – we ask, “How can I make a difference?” Help me to remember that “greater is He that is within us than he that is in the world.” I pray for more laborers! I also pray that You will inspire our church and other existing laborers to focus on harvesting and not be distracted by our intimidation or our other agendas. There is work to be done! In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

Day 28: Saturday, April 6, 2019

Handling and Surviving Persecution Matthew 10:16-25

Mighty Lord Jesus: Sometimes we expect that following You will be a route to respectability. However the truth is that discipleship is not a popularity contest. I will be required to take unpopular stances and speak truth to power, and these actions will have consequences. I pray that when it's my turn to stand up for what I believe in, You will give me the courage to speak Your truth even if it is in the face of powerful people, or even if it is in opposition to people whom I love and respect. I pray that the potential criticism and alienation will not speak louder than the prompting of Your Spirit to say or do what I believe is right. When it's my time, I know You will speak through me. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

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| CELEBRATION SUNDAY 5: APRIL 7, 2019 |
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Called To Mission

Read: Matthew 10:1-15

Father: Help us to be wise and courageous as we seek to fulfill Your Son's calling on us. Give us the strength and abilities we need to proclaim Your kingdom whenever and wherever You need us to do so. We pray in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Day 29: Monday, April 8, 2019

The Original Passover Celebration Read Exodus 12:1-14

Almighty God: We praise You that when Your people were in being held captive, You made a way for them to be delivered. Whenever You move on behalf of Your people, You always institute a symbolic means by which we are to remember Your loving actions toward them. This is because You are the same Yesterday, today, and forever and if we can only remember what you did THEN, we can have confidence that in our "RIGHT NOW" crisis or captivity You are fully capable of delivering us. As we look back we can remember times when you "passed over" opportunities to give us the consequences our negative behaviors deserved, and instead painted the doorposts of our lives with the blood of Jesus. You gave us grace, mercy and forgiveness, and we can't help but be grateful. Help us never to forget to celebrate the kindness we have received, and are still receiving. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Day 30: Tuesday, April 9, 2019

Care for the Poor

Read Luke 16:19-31

God of Mercy: You have called us to care for and share with those who are in need. I ask forgiveness for the times when I have seen people who are needy and (figuratively or literally) stepped over them, failing to show compassion – looking away as if they

were an inconvenience without even acknowledging their humanity. While I cannot always personally be of assistance, there is no excuse for not at least considering a response or whispering a prayer. I also repent for my apathy and inactivity at working to change the systems of poverty that cause the conditions of poor people. Your Beatitudes say that "the merciful will also find mercy." Help me to remember that at any time I could find myself one or two income checks from being under similar circumstances. Grant me the grace to show someone mercy today who is struggling. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Day 31: Wednesday, April 10, 2019

Mary Anoints Jesus' Body

Read John 12:1-8

Precious Lord: Mary understood that Your mission was to pour out your all on our behalf, and that in return You deserve no less than our all. Forgive me for half-hearted worship and weak praise. Forgive me surface level sacrifice: outward shows of devotion that don't really come from the heart. When I give You my best and most passionate devotion, when I praise with my whole heart and serve with all of my strength, may the aroma affect the whole atmosphere around me so that You may be glorified. Let Your anointing fill every room in my life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Day 32: Thursday, April 11, 2019

One Must Die for the Nation

Read John 11:47-53

Almighty God: I'm so glad that You are still sovereign amid all of the plotting, scheming, and political positioning that people do. You even used the assassination plot that the religious hierarchy concocted against You as a means to accomplish Your plan of salvation for all of humanity. Even today amid bolder and bolder forms of evil, in spite of the politically polarized climate brought about by wickedness in high places, YOU ARE STILL AT WORK. I am grateful that I can trust You over and above the activities of any party or institution. The government is upon Your shoulder, and the heart of kings and queens are in Your hands! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Day 33: Friday, April 12, 2019

Judas Negotiates The Betrayal

Read Matthew 26:14-16

Lord Jesus: There is very little that is more hurtful than betrayal. While some of our greatest joys can be experienced with family and in fellowship with sisters and brothers in the Church, there are also few pains that are greater than when trusted friends betray us, when family members break our hearts, and when church folks let us down. It hurts when people place what benefits THEM above the concerns of others. Help us as a community of believers to be a safe place where people can bring

their hearts, hurts, and issues without fear of betrayal. Help ME to be a trustworthy partner in prayer who does not violate the sacred trust of family, friends, or the saints, but rather safeguards them and seeks God's best for others. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Day 34: Saturday, April 13, 2019

Jesus' Last Passover Meal

Read Matthew 26:17-29

Dear Lord Jesus: Even as You sat and broke bread with the one who betrayed You, You celebrated a sacred family meal with those closest to You. We are reminded of the fact that no family is perfect. Often there is drama, and some of our most precious memories are often ironically mixed with some of our most painful ones. Thank You Lord for cherishing us enough to turn a negative into positive and to make a sacred covenant that unites us as Your family. It is a covenant that calls us "back to the table" even after relationships have been damaged by the drama. Thank You for purchasing my seat at the table. Help me to show my appreciation by doing my part to keep the family together. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

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| CELEBRATION SUNDAY 6: APRIL 14, 2019 |
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Called To Remember

Read: Matthew 26:1-13

Father: Help us to examine our motives lest we become scornful toward people whose expressions of devotion to You may seem wasteful to us. Help us to be as generous as Mary was in our service to You. We pray this in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Day 35: Monday, April 15, 2019

Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life

Read John 11:17-27

Mighty Savior: There are times when we are disappointed with how things turn out in our lives, and in our frustration we cry out, "Lord, if You had been here (or if You had only done this or that), my situation would have turned out differently." But we praise You that even after all hope seems to be gone, and we have packed it all in and tried to move on, You are still able to resurrect dead situations. Help me never to say "it's over" until YOU say "it's over." There is nothing that You cannot do, no process of nature that You cannot reverse, no dream that You cannot resurrect, and no hope that You cannot restore! In spite of the pain I may feel from what appears to be, I put my trust in your resurrection power! You CAN restore vitality! In Jesus Name, Amen.

Day 36: Tuesday, April 16, 2019

Judas Hangs Himself

Read Matthew 27:3-10

God of Mercy: We all experience guilt, shame and remorse for things that we have done that we know are wrong. However there are those for whom feelings of unworthiness and self-loathing lead to the inclination toward self-harm. At the very least, there is the tendency to hide and to close oneself off from other people. Sometimes we are inclined to self-soothing behaviors like drinking or drugging or sexual activity, which can become habitual or even addictive if used to compensate for stress or shame. At worst, there are those who actually consider doing harm to themselves or to others. In the moments where feeling guilty tries to take us down the dark path of shame, help us to choose to reach to You rather than hiding from You. You have given us the gift of confession and repentance, which leads to restoration. In every instance of guilt, from the most minor deception to the most egregious offense, shine Your light of truth in us, and help us to CHOOSE LIFE by turning to You with it. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Day 37: Wednesday, April 17, 2019

Jesus Crucified

Read Matthew 27:32-44

Precious Lord: I praise You for loving me enough to put up with the pain of being criticized and abused. So often when we stand up for what we believe is right, we are ostracized and criticized. It can be a lonely place. But through the criticism, persecution, and eventual crucifixion, You determined that even I, with all of my imperfection and trifling ways, was worth it. You decided that You loved me too much to save Yourself. My salvation is the fruit of Your love and suffering. Help me to follow You: to remember that Agape love sometimes requires that I go through some uncomfortable things on behalf of others. Help me not to be so concerned about "my right to be right" that I miss an opportunity to see the power of Your love operate. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Day 38: Thursday, April 18, 2019

Guards Secure the Tomb

Read Matthew 27:62-66

Dear God: There are times when the enemy does his level best to make us feel "locked in," barricaded in tombs of discouragement and hopelessness. Dead end jobs, stagnated relationships, seemingly entrenched poverty in our communities seem to make us feel situationally "hemmed in" without any hope of escape. Please help me to remember today that with all of the things that the enemy does to secure the tombs, that there is a power of liberation within us that cannot be contained. There are no locks or chains strong enough to contain Your resurrection power in our lives. As well

organized as the enemy's prison guards may be, the power of Your love is my "tomb buster." I AM DESTINED TO BE FREE! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Day 39: Friday, April 19, 2019

Mary Meets the Risen Jesus

Read John 20:10-18

Lord Jesus: When circumstances in life don't go the way that we've prayed that they would, the grief and pain of disappointment and disillusionment are so bitter that they are all we can see in front of us. We are blinded by our broken dreams and hurting hearts. However it is often during those time that we forget Your promises to us, and fail to see that You are right there standing with us. When we don't like what has happened and it seems like You are missing, open our eyes to see You standing there. Teach us how to recognize You in the midst of our pain. When we're alone, You are present. When we're weak, You are strong. When we're hopeless, You give us purpose. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Day 40: Saturday, April 20, 2019

Reigning Triumphant with Christ

Read Revelation 20:1-6

Dear Lord Jesus: My ultimate goal is to reign with You. I thank you for the joys and victories that I see every day: the reality of waking up every morning, having food and health, strength, family, employment and other measures of success. Still, these are "minor league" victories that pale in comparison to the sheer ecstasy and bliss of reigning with You: knowing You and standing with You in a place that the fear of death has no power over me, and evil and injustice are bound up and entombed. Every disappointment, pain, issue, discouragement, snub, or struggle that I experience today as I try to do the right thing will be paid back times infinity. As I work to establish kingdom outposts here that foreshadow Your future reign, help me to give it all of my strength and invite others to join in the work. As William McDowell writes, "We want to see Your Kingdom here!" In Jesus' Name, Amen.

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| RESURRECTION SUNDAY: APRIL 21, 2019 |
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Called To Believe

Read: Matthew 26:1-13

Father: How thankful we are that on this Resurrection Sunday and every day we can celebrate the triumph of Jesus over death. Use us to change hearts and minds with this good news of a risen Savior. We pray this in Jesus' Name. Amen.



I WILL
RESTORE

JOEL 2:25