

Following Jesus



Lent Devotional 2014

Chestnut Level Presbyterian Church

1068 Chestnut Level Road, Quarryville, PA 17566

www.chestnutlevel.org

Dear Child of God,

The season of Lent is a period of 40 days from Ash Wednesday through Easter Sunday (NOT counting Sundays). The number 40 is significant in the Bible – Noah and the flood; Moses and the Israelites in the desert; and the temptation of Jesus in the desert before beginning his public ministry. For centuries, Christians have observed Lent as a time of prayer, fasting, and reflection in preparation for Jesus' death and celebration of His resurrection on Easter Sunday.

As a church community, we want to encourage you to observe Lent this year as individuals, as families, and the body of Christ united with Christians all over the world! But how? Practices of prayer, worship, fasting are all wonderful, but can be hollow and meaningless without first committing your heart, soul and mind to seeking God. Once you have done that, here are some ways you can observe Lent:

WORSHIP – true, community worship is an active experience where God seeks us out and we respond to Him. You have the opportunity to worship on Ash Wednesday (March 5); Sundays during Lent; Maundy Thursday (April 17); Good Friday (April 18); and Easter Sunday (April 20).

PERSONAL/FAMILY PRAYER AND DEVOTIONS – This devotional follows the Gospel passages that Pastor Michael will preach during Lent. We encourage you to daily read the Scripture passages. Savor the text by reading it slowly each day with the intent to listen to God. Most passages are dwelt on for an entire week—read the same passages for the week each day. This allows God's Word to sink deeply into our minds and hearts. As you read, a word, thought, phrase or image may grab your attention – trust that this is God in conversation with you! Listen for how the passage might connect with your life and reflect on how God is working in your life. Then enter into a time of prayer. There are additional Scripture passages if you decide you'd like to read more.

GROUP STUDY – You are invited to join Pastor Michael on Wednesdays, beginning March 12 at 6:30pm in the Family Life Center for a discussion about the Scripture passage and encouragement in your journey through Lent this year.

FASTING – This is a new one for our community! Fasting is not to be entered into lightly. Refraining from chocolate because you want to lose weight is not fasting. Nor is limiting screen time in order to gain some self-control over bad habits. **“Fasting must forever centre on God”** (Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*). So, our fast is meant for spiritual purposes – to seek the heart of God, kept only between you and God. It is not a public practice (like worship) and the time spent fasting is usually spent in prayer and reading God's Word. Want to try? We recommend that you commit to a fast one time during the week and instead of your normal activity, use this devotional to pray and read God's Word. Start with fasting from one lunch or dinner – or if fasting from food is not an option for you, “fast” from an activity you normally do like watching TV or reading a book. If you want to commit to fasting and you would like some accountability, you will have the opportunity to complete a commitment card and Pastor Michael will commit to praying for you; he will call you once during Lent, and after Easter you will be invited to a conversation with others who committed to fasting and want to talk about your experience.

You are loved by God. You always have been and you always will be. May you enter into God's fullness of life as you observe Lent this year by seeking Him!

Blessings,

Tricia Wilson, Director of Christian Education

March 5, Ash Wednesday

Scripture Readings

Psalm 51:1-2

¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.

Mark 2:18-21

¹⁸ Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and people came and said to Jesus, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" ¹⁹ Jesus said to them, "The wedding guests cannot fast while the bridegroom is with them, can they? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. ²⁰ The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day.

²¹ "No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made."

Quiet Reflection

Read this passage again slowly – discover a word or phrase that catches your attention. Linger over that phrase and utter thoughts, desires, feelings to God as you pray.

Prayer (adapted from the Book of Common Worship)

Almighty God,

You despise nothing you have made and you forgive the sins of all who repent. Create in me a new and contrite heart that truly repents of my sins and acknowledges my brokenness. God of all mercy, grant me complete forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ, my Redeemer who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Additional Scripture Passages

Matthew 9:14-17; John 3:22-30; Isaiah 58:1-9; Matthew 6:16-21; Matthew 4:1-11

March 6-12, The First week of Lent

Scripture Readings

Psalm 51:3-5

³For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
⁴Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence
and blameless when you pass judgment.
⁵Indeed, I was born guilty,
a sinner when my mother conceived me.

Mark 2:1-11

When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. ²So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. ³Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. ⁴And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. ⁵When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." ⁶Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, ⁷"Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" ⁸At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, "Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? ⁹Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and take your mat and walk?' ¹⁰But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic— ¹¹"I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home."

Quiet Reflection

Slowly read this passage again, perhaps out loud. What stirs within your heart? Speak to God in prayer those thoughts and feelings stirring within you.

Prayer (adapted from the Book of Common Worship)

God of the covenant,

As the forty days of deluge swept away the world's corruption and watered new beginnings of righteousness and life, so in the saving flood of Baptism we are washed clean and born again. Throughout these forty days of Lent, unseal within me the wellspring of your grace, cleanse my heart of all that is not holy, and cause your gift of new life to flourish once again in my life. Grant this through Jesus Christ my Redeemer, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Additional Scripture Passages

Mark 1; Mark 2:12-22; Isaiah 52:13-15; Romans 8:1-4

March 13-19, The Second week of Lent

Scripture Readings

Psalm 51:6-9

⁶You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.
⁷Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
⁸Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.
⁹Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.

Mark 2:23-27

²³One sabbath he was going through the grainfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. ²⁴The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?" ²⁵And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food? ²⁶He entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions." ²⁷Then he said to them, "The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath;

Quiet Reflection

Remind yourself you are in God's presence and read this passage again, slowly. How has God's Word moved you? Enjoy God's presence with you in these quiet moments.

Prayer (adapted from the Book of Common Worship)

God of mercy,

You are full of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in mercy, and always ready to forgive. Grant me grace to renounce all that displeases you and to cling to Christ, that in every way I may be your loving child; through Jesus Christ my Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Additional Scripture Passages

Mark 3; Mark 4:1-34; Isaiah 53:1-3; Romans 8:5-11

March 20-26, the Third week of Lent

Scripture Readings

Psalm 51:10-12

¹⁰Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.
¹¹Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
¹²Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Mark 4:35-41

³⁵ On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." ³⁶ And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. ³⁷ A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. ³⁸ But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" ³⁹ He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. ⁴⁰ He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" ⁴¹ And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

Quiet Reflection

Read this passage again slowly. Find a word or phrase that catches your eye or moves your heart. Slowly repeat it. Pray your needs, desires and thoughts in quiet meditation.

Prayer (adapted from the Book of Common Worship)

O God, the Fountain of Life,

To a humanity parched with thirst, you offer the living water of grace which springs up from the rock, our Savior Jesus Christ. Grant me the gift of your Spirit, that I may learn to profess my faith with courage, and announce with joy the wonder of your love. I ask this through my Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Additional Scripture Passages

Mark 5; Mark 6; Isaiah 53:4-6; Romans 8:12-17

March 27-April 2, the Fourth week of Lent

Scripture Readings

Psalm 51:13-14

¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

¹⁴ Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

Mark 7:1-20

Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, ² they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. ³ (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; ⁴ and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) ⁵ So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" ⁶ He said to them, "Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; ⁷ in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.' ⁸ You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition." ⁹ Then he said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition! ¹⁰ For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must surely die.' ¹¹ But you say that if anyone tells father or mother, 'Whatever support you might have had from me is Corban' (that is, an offering to God)— ¹² then you no longer permit doing anything for a father or mother, ¹³ thus making void the word of God through your tradition that you have handed on. And you do many things like this." ¹⁴ Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand ¹⁵ there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile." ¹⁷ When he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about the parable. ¹⁸ He said to them, "Then do you also fail to understand? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile, ¹⁹ since it enters, not the heart but the stomach, and goes out into the sewer?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.) ²⁰ And he said, "It is what comes out of a person that defiles."

Quiet Reflection

Remind yourself you are in God's presence. Read the passage again, perhaps outloud. Notice how God might be speaking to you through the Word. Let your heart respond in prayer.

Prayer (adapted from the Book of Common Worship)

Gracious God,

In order that the children of earth might discern good from evil, you sent your Son to be the light of the world. As Christ shines upon me, may I learn what pleases you, and live in all truth and goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Additional Scripture Passages

Mark 7:21-26; Mark 8:1-26; Isaiah 53:7-9; Romans 8:18-21

Scripture Readings

Psalm 51:15-17

¹⁵O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

¹⁶For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.

¹⁷The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Mark 8:27-38

²⁷Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" ²⁸And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." ²⁹He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." ³⁰And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him. ³¹Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³²He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." ³⁴He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Quiet Reflection

Read this passage again slowly – discover a word or phrase that catches your attention. Linger over that phrase and utter thoughts, desires, feelings to God as you pray.

Prayer (adapted from the Book of Common Worship)

Almighty God,

Your Son came into the world to free us all from sin and death. Breath upon me with the power of your Spirit, that I may be raised to new life in Christ, and serve you in holiness and righteousness all my days; through the same Jesus Christ, my Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Additional Scripture Passages

Mark 9; Mark 10; Isaiah 53:10-12; Romans 8:22-25

April 10-16, Holy Week begins Sunday, April 13, Palm Sunday

Scripture Readings

John 1:29

Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

Mark 11:1-11

When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples ²and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. ³If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.'" ⁴They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, ⁵some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" ⁶They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. ⁷Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. ⁸Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. ⁹Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

"Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁰ Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

¹¹Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

Quiet Reflection

Remind yourself you are in God's presence and read this passage again, slowly. How has God's Word moved you? Enjoy God's presence with you in these quiet moments.

Prayer (adapted from the Book of Common Worship)

Merciful God,

As we enter Holy Week and gather at your house of prayer, turn my heart again to Jerusalem, to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that united with Christ and all the faithful I may one day enter in triumph the city not made by human hands, the new Jerusalem, eternal in the heavens, where with you and the Holy Spirit, Christ lives in glory forever. Amen.

Additional Scripture Passages

Mark 11:12-33; Mark 12; Mark 13; Mark 14:1-65; Revelation 5:12; Romans 8:26-27

April 17, Maundy Thursday

Scripture Readings

Psalm 22:1-8

¹My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? ²O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest. ³Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. ⁴In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. ⁵To you they cried, and were saved; in you they trusted, and were not put to shame. ⁶But I am a worm, and not human; scorned by others, and despised by the people. ⁷All who see me mock at me; they make mouths at me, they shake their heads; ⁸“Commit your cause to the LORD; let him deliver—let him rescue the one in whom he delights!”

Mark 14:66-72

⁶⁶While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came by. ⁶⁷When she saw Peter warming himself, she stared at him and said, “You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth.” ⁶⁸But he denied it, saying, “I do not know or understand what you are talking about.” And he went out into the forecourt. Then the cock crowed. ⁶⁹And the servant-girl, on seeing him, began again to say to the bystanders, “This man is one of them.” ⁷⁰But again he denied it. Then after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, “Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean.” ⁷¹But he began to curse, and he swore an oath, “I do not know this man you are talking about.” ⁷²At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, “Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.” And he broke down and wept.

Quiet Reflection

Remind yourself you are in God’s presence. Read the passage again, perhaps out loud. Notice how God might be speaking to you through the Word. Let your heart respond in prayer.

Prayer (adapted from the Book of Common Worship)

O God,

Your love was embodied in Jesus Christ, who washed disciples’ feet on the night of his betrayal. Wash me from the stain of sin, so that, in hours of danger, I may not fail, but follow you Son through every trial, and praise him always as Lord and Christ, to whom be glory now and forever. Amen.

Additional Scripture Passages

Revelation 5:12; Romans 8:28-30

April 18, Good Friday

Scripture Readings

Psalm 22:1-8

¹My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? ²O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest. ³Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. ⁴In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. ⁵To you they cried, and were saved; in you they trusted, and were not put to shame. ⁶But I am a worm, and not human; scorned by others, and despised by the people. ⁷All who see me mock at me; they make mouths at me, they shake their heads; ⁸“Commit your cause to the LORD; let him deliver—let him rescue the one in whom he delights!”

Mark 15:1-47

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. ²Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” He answered him, “You say so.” ³Then the chief priests accused him of many things. ⁴Pilate asked him again, “Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.” ⁵But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

⁶Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. ⁷Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection.⁸ So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. ⁹Then he answered them, “Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?” ¹⁰For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. ¹¹But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. ¹²Pilate spoke to them again, “Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?” ¹³They shouted back, “Crucify him!” ¹⁴Pilate asked them, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Crucify him!” ¹⁵So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

¹⁶Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor’s headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. ¹⁷And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. ¹⁸And they began saluting him, “Hail, King of the Jews!” ¹⁹They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him.²⁰ After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

²¹They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. ²²Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). ²³And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. ²⁴And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

²⁵It was nine o’clock in the morning when they crucified him. ²⁶The inscription of the charge against him read, “The King of the Jews.” ²⁷And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. ²⁹Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, “Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, ³⁰save yourself, and come down from the

cross!"³¹In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. ³²Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

³³When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ³⁴At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ³⁵When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah." ³⁶And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." ³⁷Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. ³⁸And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.³⁹Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

⁴⁰There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. ⁴¹These used to follow him and provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.

⁴²When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, ⁴³Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁴⁴Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. ⁴⁵When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. ⁴⁶Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. ⁴⁷Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where the body was laid.

Quiet Reflection

Leisurely read this passage again. Is there a word or idea that stirred within you? Give it your attention and offer it to God through prayer. Is there something you'd like to ask God about? Offer it to Him.

Prayer (adapted from the Book of Common Worship)

Merciful God,

You gave your Son to suffer the shame of the cross. Save me from hardness of heart, that, seeing him who died for me, I may repent, confess my sin, and receive your overflowing love, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Additional Scripture Passages

Romans 8:31-36

April 20, Easter Sunday

Scripture Readings

Psalm 118: 1; 15-18; 22-24

¹O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever!

¹⁵There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous: "The right hand of the LORD does valiantly; ¹⁶the right hand of the LORD is exalted; the right hand of the LORD does valiantly."

¹⁷I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the LORD.

¹⁸The LORD has punished me severely, but he did not give me over to death. ²²The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

²³This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. ²⁴This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Mark 16:1-8

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. ²And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. ³They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" ⁴When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. ⁵As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. ⁶But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. ⁷But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." ⁸So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. And all that had been commanded them they told briefly to those around Peter. And afterward Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.

Quiet Reflection

Rejoice in God's presence today. Give thanks to him for all He has done through Jesus Christ! Read the Scripture again, slowly, savoring the words that Jesus has been raised from the dead. Hallelujah!

Prayer (adapted from the Heidelberg Catechism 45)

Risen Jesus,

No one saw it coming, but your march out of the tomb has changed everything. This day leaves me breathless in wonder—death is conquered, hope lives, love wins, and salvation is here! Give me profound delight as I enjoy your resurrection life and deep devotion as I follow your resurrection way. Christ is risen, hallelujah! Amen.

Additional Scripture Passages

Mark 16:9-20; Romans 8:37-39