



A
Daily Devotion
Reading of the Gospels
For

A watercolor-style background in shades of grey and white, with a large, elegant purple cursive word "Lent" written across it. Below the word, the text "He fasted for forty days and forty nights..." is written in a smaller, black serif font.

Lent

"He fasted for forty days
and forty nights..."

And
EASTER

April 1-April 6, 2019

Days 23-28

Book 5 of 8

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Daily Lenten Readings

Day 23 Mon 4/1/19

The Gospel of LUKE

Luke 13

This chapter is details several interactions Jesus has with people to whom he is ministering. It includes a parable, teaching about the kingdom of God, and an act of healing. Two passages stood out to me from this chapter.

The first is the parable of the barren fig tree. In the parable, the tree was given another year to bear fruit (verses 6 - 9). The year wasn't a walk in the park, or simply a repeat of previous years. This year would be different. The gardener laid out plans for the *work* that was going to go into helping the tree bear fruit. He would dig around the tree and add manure to it. There were things that need to be unearthed and replaced in the life of the fig tree in order for it to have a chance to bear fruit. According to my interpretation of the parable, Jesus, as the gardener, works with us, as the fig trees, to do three things: 1) save us from the axe, "sir, let it alone for one more year...", 2) remove what is hindering us from producing fruit, "until I dig around it..." and 3) provide "new" necessary soil for fruit production, "and put manure on it." By saving us from the axe, Jesus extends grace offers an opportunity for repentance. By digging around us, Jesus helps us to be rid of hindrances such as old hurts, resentments, fear, etc. which have held us back from being fruitful. By bringing us fresh manure, Jesus provides us with new principles (loving God and loving our neighbors) by which to live that will cause us to bear fruit.

The second instance that stood out in this passage was Jesus' healing of the woman on the Sabbath (verses 10 - 17). To me this demonstrates that God's timing is not our timing. If it were up to the leaders of the synagogue, the woman might have missed her chance at healing. But Jesus declared (verse 16): "And ought not this woman, daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from bondage on the Sabbath day?" The woman, how had been afflicted for 18 years, did not allow the small-mindedness and narrow rules of others deter her from seeking healing from Jesus. She also did not let the length of her suffering deter her from seeking the healing. In addition, the leaders of the synagogue weren't "big" enough to affect the timing of God's healing for one of His children. This reading says to me, seek Jesus for healing and don't meddle with the timing of God's healing for others (stay in your lane).

Thank you God for working on me, for extending grace, and for providing healing. Amen.

SUBMITTED BY Marissa Brady



Finding "It" The Gospel of Luke Luke 15-Luke 16

Sometimes in life we wonder what our next step will be. We might wonder if we are making the right decisions. We may wonder if we make the right choices in regards to our life, careers, finances, spirit, relationships, etc. How do we know if we find the "it" that we're looking for in life?

Chapter 15 talks in parables about finding things that are lost...the lost sheep and how a shepherd would rejoice in finding the one sheep while leaving 99 in the wilderness to search for that one. He then rejoices with friends; the lost coin that is found after a frantic search by using lamp light and sweeping until it is retrieved. And, upon finding it, she celebrates with friends; the lost son, returning home after he demanded his birthright money and squandered it all! Yet, upon his return he was celebrated, with a grand party!

Keep reading on to Chapter 16 and you will see how it is wise to be a good steward and a faithful steward. How you behave with little is how you would behave with much and visa-versa. Can you be trusted? Can you even be a good steward? After the rich man was said to be wasting his goods, the man tried to right his wrongs by calling in his debtors one-by-one to make some type of amends in order to be received by them later.

People don't have to panic and rearrange when they do the right thing in the beginning.

In wrapping up the two chapters, when you find the "It" in your life that you may be in search of, how will you treat it? Is it safe with you? Life will always be full of adjustments. However, in "finding your way through life's journey," make moves that are fair to you and others.

Prayer: God thank you for your many blessings. I pray that I recognize them all. However, for those seen and unseen, I am thankful. I pray to be a better steward of my time, my gifts and the life you have for me. In Jesus' name. AMEN



Ask. Receive. Be Thankful.

The Gospel of Luke
Luke 17-Luke 18

Ten men were healed from their disease of Leprosy after merely asking as Jesus was passing through, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" Jesus gave an instruction for them to go to see the priests. Before they made it to their destination, they noticed that they were already healed. Only one turned around to express his gratitude.

Before Noah's ark sailed due to the rain, this chapter says, "The people were eating, drinking, marrying...the flood came and destroyed them all." In the days of Lot, before the fire and sulfur rained down to destroy...the people were eating, drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. And, the chapter says, it will be the same way when the son of God is revealed. There will be no warning. You will be doing what you do with no need to try and retrieve something or change something. You, too, may be eating, drinking, marrying...

Be thankful in what God has given to you and all that he wants for you while you are here.

We should not be afraid, but continue to live in hope and belief and trust in God's deliverance. Luke 18:1 says, "Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and never give up," just like the persistent widow.

In reading the two chapters in their entirety, it gets back around to Jesus once again healing a blind man at a mere request from asking, "Lord, I want to see." And, Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God."

Do you notice when you have received an answer to your prayers? You may not have an obvious healing such as a prayer to see and your sight is restored, but you might have heartbreak or stresses that need a healing for your day-to-day well-being.

Are you thankful for the gifts that God places in your life?

Look for the signs. God gives gifts. Give him the glory and be thankful.

SUBMITTED BY Wanda Clay



Daily Lenten Readings

Day 26 Thur 4/4/19

The Gospel of Luke Luke 19-Luke 20

What would you do if you suddenly found out Jesus was coming to stay at your house? How would it change your life? This is exactly what happens in Chapter 19 of Luke's gospel. Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem and passes through the town of Jericho. A tax collector, who is short in stature named Zacchaeus, climbs a tree near the road to get a better view. Jesus passes by, calls him down and, much to the surprise of many, declares he will be staying in Zacchaeus' home (as a tax collector for the Roman occupation, Zacchaeus was not the most beloved man in town). Zacchaeus is so surprised and overjoyed that he agrees to give half his wealth to the poor and to restore fourfold anything anyone claims to have been cheated out of by him as tax collector.

Does Jesus' presence always require a response? If so, how has Jesus changed your life? Chapter 20 starts with Jesus' authority being called into question. He then shares a parable and talks about marriage and pride.

Be sure and read these two chapters today. In your prayers remember the fact that Jesus' presence challenges us to change.

SUBMITTED BY Herbert Lester, Jr.



Daily Lenten Readings
Day 27 Fri 4/5/19

The Gospel of Luke Luke 21-Luke 22

The greatest gift we can ever give Christians is a Bible. If they don't read it, never argue, criticize, or give up on them. Let's pray that the spirit will touch them and they will grow closer to the Lord and mature spiritually. As Christians reading scripture daily, praying, trusting and obeying God. For example, did Jesus promise complete physical protection? (22:18) No in fact, he told of coming persecutions: Believers would be hated, persecuted by religious and political leaders, betrayed by family and friends and some would even be killed (vv.12-17). James (Acts 12:1-2), Peter (acts 12:3-5), Stephen (Acts 6:8-15; 7:54-60) and many other Apostles (Acts 4:1-3; 5:17-18, 40) suffered beatings, imprisonment and death because of their faith.

But at the same time Jesus promised that not a hair of our head will perish. How does that square with the promise of persecution? It was a figurative way of saying that though their earthly bodies could be killed, their spirits would live forever. If they remained true to the faith, they would be ensured of life everlasting (v.18). Furthermore, God would assist them in times of persecution, giving them the right words to say and the wisdom to know how to respond (v.15). Jesus' primary focus was on the spiritual results, not the physical outcome. That's why, through Christian martyrs have been beheaded, "not a hair of their heads perished."

Across the bottom were reading these words from (Luke 22:27): "I am among you as one who serves!" Just grasping this statement of Jesus' mission, is so amazing, to serve those he came to seek and save (Luke 19:10), Church is exactly what we need today. If Jesus is willing to do the dirtiest jobs for his followers-like scrubbing their dirty feet (John 13:1-17) I will do anything they ask me to do without grumbling or rolling my eyes at Church to help the ministry team. Pastor I understand to serve others is not an obligation, but an opportunity to reflect Jesus' servant heart and his love towards them. Church from now on when requests are made of us, they are chances to become more like the one who served his followers by laying down his life for us.

Prayer: Lord, yes at times it's difficult to serve people needs, please teach us to be more like you, always willing to express your love in all these opportunities at Clark, this is how we serve those who are less fortunate, your love for us empowers us to serve others. Amen.

SUBMITTED BY Jethro B. Smith



Daily Lenten Readings
Day 28 Sat 4/6/19

The Gospel of Luke Luke 23-Luke 24

In Luke 23 the gospel tells of the trial, punishment, mockery, beating and crucifixion of Jesus. In chapter 24, we have Luke's account of the resurrection and how Jesus appeared post-resurrection to many of his followers. How would the Easter story be different if it did not lead to the awful reality of Good Friday? Just suppose Jesus and his followers had shared a final Passover meal on Holy Thursday, went into the Garden of Gethsemane to pray afterward and simply spent the night there? Could we have skipped Peter's denial and Judas' betrayal and still have something to celebrate on Easter? Is the pain and shame of Good Friday a necessary prerequisite to the joy of resurrection on Easter Sunday morning?

As you read these chapters, consider the pain and suffering it took to begin to right the many wrongs done to people of color in this country. Consider the personal sacrifices you have made on behalf of family, friends and loved ones. Could God do any less to save all of humanity?

SUBMITTED BY Herbert Lester, Jr.

Ash Wednesday begins the Lenten season

Lent is a solemn religious observance in the liturgical calendar that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends approximately six weeks later, before Easter Sunday.

This book of Meditations is a means of studying and sharing God's word as it was designed by the pastor to read the four books of the Gospels-Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

The Devotional Readings will be published in eight booklets. Copies may be requested from the church office or sent electronically.

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Daily Lenten Readings
Book 5 of 8



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Witness
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