



SAVING GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

LENTEN SEASON 2020

"LISTENING TO GOD"

Through Worship, Prayer, Self-Denial

Daily Devotions



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LENTEN SEASON 2020

Ash Wednesday, February 26

12:00 pm & 6:00 pm Worship

Wednesdays, March 4-April 1

12:00 pm Worship

1:00 pm Soup Lunch

5:00 pm Dinner

6:00 pm Worship w/Holden Evening Prayer

Tuesday, April 7

Lenten Communion Service/Luncheon 11:00 am

Wednesday, April 8

10:30 am – 6:30 pm Prayer Vigil

Maundy Thursday, April 9

7:00 pm Worship & 1st Communion

Good Friday, April 10

12:00 pm Worship

Easter Sunday, April 12

7:00 am, 8:30 am, 10:30 am Easter Worship

7:30 am – 10:30 am Easter Breakfast

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Easter Sunday, April 12 contd.

Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." ¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher).

¹⁷Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

In all the years you have heard the Gospel, what impresses you most about what You hear today?

Go around the Dinner table and have your guests two things for which they are thankful.

Lord Jesus, You have come into our lives through the waters of baptism and through faith in Jesus Christ, claimed us as Your own children. On this Easter, we thank you for all the gifts that You have given us the forgiveness of sins and the promise of everlasting life. Bless this food to our bodies and those who have prepared it, keep us in Your care and teach us to listen to You. In Jesus Name we pray. Amen

February 26 Ash Wednesday

"¹²Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; ¹³rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing." (Joel 2:12-13)

Abraham Lincoln's secretary of war, Edwin Stanton, was angered by an army officer who accused him of favoritism. Stanton complained to Lincoln, who suggested that Stanton write the officer a sharp letter. Stanton did, and showed the strongly worded missive to the president. "What are you going to do with it?" Lincoln inquired. Surprised, Stanton replied, "Send it." Lincoln shook his head. "You don't want to send that letter," he said. "Put it in the stove. That's what I do when I have written a letter while I am angry. It's a good letter and you had a good time writing it and feel better. Now burn it, and write another." (Today in the Word, February, 1991, p. 9)

We sometimes feel justified in our anger, but "the LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing." (Joel 2:13d) He reminds us what is truly important. It is less important to be right, than to love the LORD your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind. (Luke 10:27) We never come to God to tell him how he is wrong. We come to God through faith in Christ that we might know His mind and how He is forming us into the one He desires us to be. "though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool." (Isaiah 1:18)

Today as you go throughout your day, when you are frustrated ask the LORD to help you see others as He sees you.

LORD Jesus, I am sorry for my sin and all of my shortcomings. Teach me to humbly come to You and receive Your forgiveness and to realize that You are shaping me into Your image. Thank You for Your forgiveness and steadfast love. Amen

Thursday, February 27

*"...you shall meditate on the book of the law day and night..." –
Joshua 1:8*

"...their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night." – Psalm 1:2

It seems to me that autographed footballs, baseballs, jerseys, and posters have fallen out of style. When I was growing up, it was amazing to have an item that was signed by some famous person—especially if it had a note along with it! Now we get to hear famous people a lot more often through social media and the internet, and we're not always happy with what they have to say. Either way, those Old Testament people of God knew they had something special when they received a word from God, "the law of the Lord." They knew that if they wanted to hear from God, then they could turn to him in the Scripture. All they needed to do to hear from God was think about his Scripture often.

Prayer: Ask for the Lord's help to enjoy his Word.

Easter Sunday, April 12

The Resurrection

(Read John 20:1-18 at the Dinner table on Easter Sunday)

20 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." ³Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. ⁴The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples returned to their homes.

¹¹But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹²and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. ¹³They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." ¹⁴When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." ¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher).

Contd.

Saturday, April 11

Jesus in the tomb.

“And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away.” – Matthew 27:59-60

This was the end. You might be able to imagine the sound the stone would make as its rolled to close off the tomb. Then, silence.

What were others saying? “Wasn’t that quick for a crucifixion?”

“He must have been suffering quite a bit.” “Is it really over?”

“What do we do now?”

There were no answers. Only silence.

Prayer: Ask God to comfort you as you’re reminded of loved ones who have passed away. Jesus has died just like we do and it would have been terribly painful for his closest friends and disciples.

Friday, February 28

“...all the people did what was right in their own eyes.” – Judges 21:25

Judges is one of the most graphic books in the whole bible. This is the book that contains the story of Samson who was a mighty warrior against the Philistines. But, if this book were a modern-day TV show, it would be on HBO and not on PBS. The verse above is exactly why things were so bad during the time of Judges. People did not listen to the Lord, but they did what *they* thought was best. We can think our way around all sorts of sins and foolishness and call it a good idea. What we need is something we can rely on. Not a word from the news, funny tv show, or some internet personality. We need a word from the Lord so that we know what is right in his eyes.

Prayer: Ask for God’s forgiveness for those times when we think we know what’s best without considering his Word. Ask that God would remind you of Scriptures that apply to your life.

Saturday, February 29th

“Now the serpent was craftier than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden’?” -Genesis 3:1

People can do all sorts of spiritual listening. The fact that we have so many options make it all the more important to tune our ears to God. The Devil was able to tempt Adam and Eve in the garden by twisting God’s word. We should notice that the Devil’s main objective is to call into question the reliability of trusting in God’s word. He begins by asking if he got the phrase right. Are these really the words God said? Shortly after, he challenges God’s word by totally contradicting it. “But the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not die’” (Genesis 3:4). Adam and Eve were caught in this crafty temptation to doubt God’s word. All the more reason to become familiar with the word so that we might be ready to stand against the devil’s temptations.

Prayer: God give me an ear for your word that I might be able to discern what is true and what is false. Help me to hear the Holy Spirit as it reminds me of your Scripture.

Good Friday, April 10

The Crucifixion

(Read John 18:1-19:42)

“⁴Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, “Whom are you looking for?” ⁵They answered, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus replied, “I am he.”

“Here is your King!” (John 18:4-5)

“¹⁵They cried out, “Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!” Pilate asked them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but the emperor.”

¹⁶Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus; ¹⁷and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. ¹⁸There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them.” (John 19:15-18)

“¹⁹Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” ²⁰Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek.

(John 19:15-20)

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

In the Old Testament it was prophesied that a Messiah would come. He would be born in Bethlehem, (Micah 5:2) of a virgin, (Isaiah 7:14) of the line of Abraham, (Gen. 12:3) He would be Immanuel, (Is. 7:14) he would be called King (Zach. 9:9) His words would be written down and studied by kings, rulers, emperors, generals, scholars, scientists and philosophers. He still comes to us today and has the power to change our lives and transform us. He calls us to “Listen to Him.”

Lord Jesus, on this Good Friday when You gave Your life for our sins, help us to stop and marvel at what You have done. Speak to us through Your Word that we might Listen to You.” Amen

Maundy Thursday, April 9

The Passover

“Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is my body.’ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.’” – Matthew 26:26-29

It was on the night in which Jesus was going to be betrayed that he and his disciples celebrated this Passover meal. What was new is that Jesus was reorienting the meal around his coming sacrifice not the sacrifice of some lamb. So, we hear these words again from the Lord, “this is my body” and “this is my blood of the covenant.” Christ has given us his life even in the eating and drinking of the wine. We actually feel and taste and see, but over and above that, faith recognizes Christ and his promises again and again.

Prayer: Lord, give me a childlike wonder for the Lord’s Supper. Help me to understand and believe that Christ is for us and not against us.

Sunday, March 1

“Speak, for your servant is listening.” – 1 Samuel 3:10

Here, the time of Judges comes to a close. Now, God will focus on Prophets and Kings to accomplish his will in the world. Samuel was one of those first prophets whom God called to help lead his people in the Old Testament. Whereas everyone thought they knew what was best in the book of Judges, Samuel says, “I will listen to what you have to say God,” or “Speak, for your servant is listening” (1 Sam 3:10). There was chaos in the book of judges, but when God speaks things come into order and peace. What Samuel hears from God might be unsettling to hear. God tells Samuel that he will fulfill the judgement he has spoken against the house of Eli. This is God ordering, organizing, or re-ordering what was going on in Israel. We should always seek God’s mercy, but Scripture tells us that, “the Lord disciplines those he loves” (Heb 12:6).

Prayer: Ask that God would help you to hear his Word that orders and the Word that provides peace. As if God were crafting a sculpture, sometimes God gives and sometimes God takes away.

Monday, March 2

¹³He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” (Colossians 1:13-14)

Sometimes in our lives we still live as if we are in bondage. We know that Spring is right around the corner, but we are surprised by a little snow that comes before Spring. We know that Christ has freed us from sin death and the power of the devil, but we live our lives like he is in control of everything we do. You may even hear someone say, “The devil made me do it.” Yet “God has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son.” (Colossians 1:13) He has claimed us as His own children. He has redeemed us and forgiven us of our sins, yet we still act like that’s news to us. Remember that Jesus calls you His own and will never let you go. He wants to know the abundant life only Christ can give in every aspect of your being.

Remember God’s promises:

God’s presence – “I will never leave you or forsake you.”
(Heb. 13:5)

God’s protection – “Do not be afraid, I am your shield” (Gen. 15:1)

God’s power – “for I am your God; I will strengthen you,”
(Isaiah 41:10)

God’s provision – “I will help you” (Isa. 41:10)

God’s leading – “He goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow Him because they know His voice” (John 10:4)

God’s purposes - “For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.” (Jer. 29:11)

He has claimed you as His own and will never let you go.

Lord Jesus, You are always there to protect me, provide for me and lead me and your purpose for my life is always for a future with hope guide me to live in the fullness of all that You have given me and to trust You in every circumstance. Amen

Wednesday, April 8

Preparation for Last Supper

*²¹After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, “Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me.” ²²The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking... “... ²⁶It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.” So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “Do quickly what you are going to do.”... ³¹When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³²If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once.”
(John 13:21-22, 26-27, 31-32)*

In Christ We Have:

A love that can never be fathomed
A life that can never die
A righteousness that can never be tarnished
A peace that can never be understood
A rest that can never be disturbed
A joy that can never be diminished
A hope that can never be disappointed
A glory that can never be clouded
A light that can never be darkened
A purity that can never be defiled
A beauty that can never be marred
A wisdom that can never be baffled
Resources that can never be exhausted.

In God’s infinite wisdom and Love “*He gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.*” (John 3:16) He changed the way we look at the world. He revealed his infinite love for us in what Jesus did for us that we might His joy may be in us and that our joy may be complete.” (John 15:11)
All this He has done that we might give glory to God.

Lord Jesus, we may never understand the depth of Your love for us, but teach us to “Listen to You” today as You lead us. Amen

Tuesday, April 7

Warnings against Jerusalem

"If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?" – Matthew 22:45

The gospels show that tension continued to rise after Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. The city was preparing for a Passover meal and the Scribes and the Pharisees had gotten their fill of Jesus. They tried to debate him and challenge his teaching. What Jesus brought up in order to close the conversation reveals so much of the brilliance of what God had prepared even in the Old Testament. The Pharisees could not see that David prophesied of a God-King to be born in his family line. But, this is exactly who Jesus was, the Son of David and the Son of God.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for revealing the mystery of your will to us. That you sent your very Son to us in the person Jesus Christ to be crucified and resurrected for our sake.

Tuesday, March 3

¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; ¹⁶for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together."
(Colossians 1:15-17)

Have you ever wondered where God is? What is He doing? Why doesn't He just come and help me now? How is He speaking to me? Paul reminds us that Jesus is the image of the invisible God and in Him all things in heaven and on earth were created. He holds all things together. He is always there to uplift us and hold every aspect of our lives together. He reminds us that we are never alone and in Him everything makes sense.

Remember God's Promises:

God's rest -- "Come to Me, all you that are weary and are carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28)

God's cleansing -- "If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9)

God's goodness -- "For the LORD God is a sun and shield; he bestows favor and honor. No good thing does the Lord withhold from those who walk uprightly." (Psalm 84:11)

God's faithfulness -- "For the Lord will not cast away his people, for his great name's sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you a people for himself." (1 Sam. 12:22)

Almighty God, remind me today how you hold every aspect of my life together. You continue to give me rest and forgiveness. You are my shield and my strength. You have called me Your own child and are there to guide me. Amen

Wednesday, March 4

¹⁸He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.” (Colossians 1:18-20)

Jesus Christ is the head of the body. In Him the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. He reminds us that we can come to Him and receive his forgiveness in our lives. He gives us the peace that passes all understanding and He guards our hearts and minds in Himself. (Philippians 4:7) We may feel alone, but he reminds us he has never forsaken us. He walks with us every moment of every day and leads us in right paths for His names sake. (Psalm 23)

Remember God’s Promises:

God's guidance – " He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way." (Psalm 25:9)

God's wise plan – " We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8:28)

LORD Jesus, teach us that you are to have first place in all of our lives and that through the blood of the cross we see how precious we are in Your eyes. Amen

Monday, April 6

Anointing Jesus Feet

³Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus’ feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. (John 12:3) read John 12:1-11

One last time Mary showed Jesus how much she loved Him. He had raised her brother Lazarus from the dead. She had confronted Him. *“Lord, if you would have been here, my brother would not have died.” (John 11:32)* How much pain had she been through. Earlier she sat at Jesus feet and listened to Him, instead of helping Martha, but she chose “the better part.”

Once again Jesus showed His compassion for her. *⁷Jesus said, “Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.”*

He knew what was going to happen in just a few days, yet he had compassion on her. He always has compassion on us, whenever we come to Him. He teaches us the unfathomable depth of His love for us. That we may be clothed in His love as we serve others in His name.

Lord Jesus, help us to see the occasions that arise every day that we might reflect Your love in our lives for others today. Amen

Sunday, April 5

Palm Sunday

“Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, ‘The Lord needs them.’ And he will send them immediately.” – Matthew 21:2-3

There is a lot of listening going on here. The disciples are listening to Christ instructions. They are going to get the donkey that Jesus will ride into Jerusalem. But, the person who owns the donkey will have also had to listen to the Lord and obey when the time comes. God is active in our lives providing things big and small. God takes a particular glory in the small things, the humble things, the things that go unnoticed and that are taken for granted. We can’t fathom all of what God does for us to keep the universe going, and yet he cares to help us find our keys...

Prayer: Thank God for sending Jesus into the city of Jerusalem. Pray that we would worship him with just as much zeal.

Thursday, March 5

“So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.” – Nehemiah 8:8

The book of Nehemiah is one of the “latest” books in the Old Testament. It speaks about events that occur after the prophets like Isaiah and Micah. So, judgement has fallen on the people and they have been imprisoned by Babylon. But, Babylon has now been taken over by Persia and the Persian King Artaxerxes has established a decree that the Jewish people be released back to their land in Israel! Nehemiah is at the forefront of this rebuilding project of the city of Jerusalem. Finally, after rebuilding to wall around the city, the Israelites were ready to worship the Lord. They didn’t just stay home and read the Old Testament by themselves. They came together to hear the Scripture read and explained so that they could understand! But, when they began to hear the Old Testament again, “all the people wept.” They understood why God had allowed the punishment they endured. They realized how far they had wandered from the Lord. But, this is where the people of God are encouraged, “...this day is holy to the Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength” (Nehemiah 8:10).

Prayer: Ask that God would help the pastors to clearly communicate God’s Word with a correct interpretation.

Friday, March 6

“And Jonah called out, ‘Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!’ And the people of Nineveh believed God.” – Jonah 3:4-5

Jonah was a bitter prophet...and not without good reason. The Ninevites were cruel and oppressive in interactions with their enemies including Israel. But, God told Jonah to go and prophecy against Nineveh. And Jonah tells us why, “That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning...I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing” (Jonah 4:2). It’s actually kind of hilarious. Jonah’s words are all that he said to the Ninevites. He didn’t even tell them that repenting was an option! But, when God speaks, things happen. And the Ninevites took God at his word and “believed God.” Yet, they needed to first hear the word before they could believe in it. So, even still today, we are in constant need of hearing the word of God preached to us.

Prayer: Ask God to help you understand why preaching has gotten such a bad reputation. Ask God to help you “preach” to family, friends, and even your enemies so that they might believe in God.

Saturday, April 4

Setting His face toward Jerusalem

“³²They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them what was to happen to him, ³³saying, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles; ³⁴they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise again.” (Mark 10:32-34)

We see who God is in what Jesus has done for us. He reveals a compassion beyond anything we can imagine. He reveals God’s plan to the disciples and they still didn’t understand. James and John ask Jesus if they can sit at His right and left hand when He comes into glory. They Jesus will be come King, but he will die for our sins that we might be His people. We may never fully understand what it means to “Listen to God,” but He is patient and merciful and walks with us even in the most difficult times. He is still our Shepherd.

Lord Jesus, help us to listen, not to our desires, but to Your will for our lives. Amen

Friday, April 3

Setting His face toward Jerusalem

“See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day.” – Matthew 20:18-19

Jesus was aware of what was coming his way. He was in perfect relationship with the Father and did nothing but God’s will. He knew what he was doing. But he had his eyes set on Jerusalem so that he could become a ransom and a sacrifice for sinners. I think of times when I’ve helped my brother move and it wasn’t always easy. I’d think to myself, “If I knew it was going to be this hard...then maybe I wouldn’t have been available to help!”

Christ, knowing what was ahead, followed through because of God’s great love for us.

Prayer: Thank God for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ knowing that Jesus was fully aware of the cost.

Saturday, March 7

¹⁶*For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, ... in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. (Romans 4:16b-17d)*

Luther points us to the importance of realizing that faith is “for me” “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believe in him may not parish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16) This Word is a word that we can say is “for me.” He claims us as His own. He does so through faith in Christ. It becomes a personal “for me.”

Luther wrote, “Read with great emphasis these words, “me,” “for me,” and accustom yourself to accept and apply to yourself this “me” with certain faith. The words OUR, US, FOR US, ought to be written in golden letters -- the man who does not believe them is not a Christian (Luther's Works, 26.179).

We should never be afraid to take God at His Word. To claim it is “for me.” It is then that we understand the depth of the gift of grace, though undeserved it is a precious gift. It evokes in us a love for God with all out heart, soul, strength and mind. (Luke 10:27)

LORD Jesus, teach us to take Your Word to heart and understand it is a Word “for me.” Open our hearts that we might see and believe what You have spoken and to trust that this Word “Is most certainly True.” Amen

Sunday, March 8

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation...” – Isaiah 52:7

Jesus came by announcing Good News, “repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17). We pick up the paper or a local magazine with the question in mind, “what’s going on out there in the world?” Then, we read some news. Some good. Some bad. When we hear God’s word being preached, we hear the Good News of Christ again. So, we can come to a worship service with the question in mind, “what is it that God is up to, again?” In Isaiah the people in Jerusalem were in great need of good news. Their city had just been ransacked. Their livelihood was gone, destroyed. Some family members were missing or killed. Any long-term plan that they had for their future was out of the question. We, too, face all kinds of troubles on a pretty regular basis. There’s rarely a Sunday where we aren’t in need of more good news. Praise God that we can come together and hear the good news again from a preacher.

Prayer: Ask God for his encouragement as you face the problems of the day, month, and year. Ask God to help you understand why his divine favor makes such a difference in your life.

Thursday, April 2

Jesus on His way to Jerusalem

⁹And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight ¹⁰to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, ¹¹having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.
(Philippians 1:9-11)

Knowledge comes from what we have learned, full insight comes through the Holy Spirit revealing His will to us. You may have heard it said, “can’t see the forest for the trees.” When your too close to the situation you need to step back to get a little perspective and understand the whole.

This Lent we have focused on “Listening to God.” Paul from jail prays for the Philippians that they might gain knowledge and full insight into their lives as Christ continues to guide them to tell others about Christ’s love revealed in the cross. He gives us a glimpse that as we study God’s Word, listen to sermons, Worship together, pray, and serve others through acts of mercy that he shapes us as His people to the glory and praise of God. It’s through the power of the Holy Spirit that insight comes. He guides us with subtle prompts that we may learn to “Listen to Him.” (Matthew 17:5)

Lord Jesus, open our hearts to receive Your Word and be changed by it. Teach us to “listen to You” and the Holy Spirit that we may grow in knowledge and full insight that You love may overflow in and through our lives. Amen

Wednesday, April 1

¹⁵And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. ¹⁷And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

(Colossians 3:15-17)

St. Francis of Assisi is to have said, "It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching." It is when the peace of Christ rules in our hearts that we see all that we have to be thankful for in our lives. We realize that everything we have been given even the challenges and the blessings are God's hand working in our lives to shape us into His image. Then whatever we do in word or deed reflects what Christ has done for us. That we may give Him thanks and praise.

Almighty God, let the peace of Christ rule in my heart that whatever happens today I may see You at work in in my life. Amen

Monday, March 9

³For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, ⁴and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve."... ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. ¹¹Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

(1 Corinthians 15:3-5, 10-11)

Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962), the world-famous violinist, discovered an exquisite violin which had been sold to a great collector who wouldn't part with it. Kreisler went to the man's house and as he was about to leave he asked, "Could I play the instrument once more before it is consigned to silence?" When he began to play the great virtuoso filled the room with such heart-moving music that the collector's emotions were deeply stirred. "I have no right to keep that to myself," he exclaimed. "It's yours, Mr. Kreisler. Take it into the world, and let people hear it." (Our Daily Bread, Feb. 4, 1994)

When we hear the Gospel, we should never be confused. It is simple. "Christ died for sinners in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas," the twelve, 500 brothers and sisters and to Paul. (1 Corinthians 15:3-8) When we hear the proclamation of the Gospel, we should claim that it is "for me." This Word is "for me." It has the power to change my life and calls me to follow Christ. This Word grabs a hold of us and will not let us go. It is lived out in our lives, that others might come to see and believe.

LORD Jesus, I am what I am by Your grace that has taken hold of me. Teach me to take it to the world and let people hear the hope it brings. Amen

Tuesday, March 10

^{2b}as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. ³For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, ⁴but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts.” (1 Thessalonians 2:2b-4)

“I really cannot give you the formula for success. But I can give you the formula for failure. It's this: Try to please everyone.” (Source Unknown)

Paul makes it clear, the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is centered on the cross. We will never be content if we are trying to please everybody. There is only one who matters. It is God. We may feel as if life is too busy, difficult, unmanageable, unpredictable and we are left empty. The Scriptures are the Word of God for us. We gather for worship to give God thanks and praise. We also gather to hear the Word proclaimed. Preaching doesn't begin with us it begins with the Word and moves to application in our lives. God still speaks to us in the 21st Century. He speaks through His word that we might have life abundantly.

LORD, work in our lives that we may hear Your Word and its application in our lives that we may give You thanks and honor and praise for all You are doing. Amen

Tuesday, March 31

¹²As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony”
(Colossians 3:12-14)

Every once in a while I have to dress my son. I'll be honest. It's not my forte. When I dress him as long as he has a shirt, pants, underwear, socks and shoes. I think I'm doing pretty well. It may not match, but if he likes it great. I've met people who were impeccably dressed, and were empty. I've met others who didn't have a home, that were clothed in Christ's compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience who were dressed to the nines. When Christ Clothes us, His love seen in His forgiveness for us is all that we need. All the rest is just window dressing.

Lord Jesus, guide our lives that we may be clothed in Your compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience, that Your love might reveal what You desire most in our lives. Amen

Monday, March 30

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves.” -Philippians 2:3

I think we often hear voices that say something quite different. “Don’t let anyone tell you they’re better than you.” People fight for their dignity. But, things get turned upside down when we realize that we are totally loved by God, “who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 1:3). We’ve got nothing to lose, and in fact we share a special relationship with God when we accomplish the good works that he has set out before us. A millionaire could only do so much for all the families in your neighborhood. God works on a different level. What he has never runs out. Now Christ and the gospel has been given to us. And we have a gift of good news of immeasurable worth for friends, family, and even our enemies.

Prayer: Lord, show us how to lift others up without considering how we might benefit.

Wednesday, March 11

4In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: ²proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. ³For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, ⁴and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. ⁵As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully. (2 Timothy 4:1-5)

“I look at a stone cutter hammering away at a rock a hundred times without so much as a crack showing in it. Yet at the 101st blow it splits in two. I know it was not the one blow that did it, but all that had gone before.” (Reader’s Digest, Jacob Riis)

Have you ever noticed a person who seems to have unlimited patience? They may do the same thing time and time again, but the patience comes from the one time that they know it will yield something spectacular. Have you ever watched fishermen? They cast time and time again expecting the same results, but it’s that one time they cast that makes a difference. We are called to be persistent not only when tell others about what Christ has done, but also in listening to what God desires in our lives. When you listen to a sermon, do you ask yourself what does Christ want me to learn or do you ask what’s in it for me. When my patience run thin, I am amazed when I think of the extravagant patience God must have with me. I realize that he reminding me to be persistent and patient as He still waits for me to understand.

Almighty God, teach me have patience to tell others what You are doing as I wait upon You. Amen

Thursday, March 12

God's Protection

How often do you hear "It's a Miracle"? Many years ago in High School Gym class, one of our final exams was to climb a thick rope with intervals of big knots that was tied to the ceiling of the gymnasium. We were to touch the ceiling to prove we were actually at the top. My explaining to the teacher I had an extreme fear of heights was viewed as an excuse and brought a threat that I would fail the class and not be able to graduate. I climbed the rope to a height the equivalent of a 2 to 2 1/2 story building. When I reached out to touch the ceiling I passed out and fell to the floor. When I regained consciousness all the girls were sitting around me and there was a cold cloth on my head. Some of my classmates told me "you floated down" and several others told me "Angels carried you down". It was truly a Miracle that I never had a single broken bone, bump, bruise or rope burn.

God protects you in ways you may not be aware of.

Hebrews 13:1-2 Continue to love each other with true brotherly love. Don't forget to be kind to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it!

Prayer suggestion: When feeling frightened or in despair, ask God to carry you and lift you up in strength and spirit. Thank Him for the protection and blessings He gives us.

Brenda Marlow

Sunday, March 29

"When you harvest your land, don't harvest right up to the edges of your field or gather the gleanings from the harvest. Don't strip your vineyard bare or go back and pick up the fallen grapes. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am Lord, your God."
-Leviticus 19:9-10 (The Message translation)

I really hate to waste food. Since I was a small child, it was instilled in me to finish everything on my plate. I worry that I will waste something. That I won't squeeze the full potential out of every last penny that's mine. This isn't how it works in God's kingdom. Instead, he says, "there's enough." In fact, there's more than enough. There's enough for you, for the homeless, and for those passing through! But, God asked the Israelites to just leave it to him. Don't cut down the field right to the edge and if you drop some of the harvest, don't pick it up! God says, "I'll make sure it gets to the right hands." But, the Israelites had to trust that the Lord would really see to it. So do we if we are really going to stop pinching all of our pennies so that what we have can be a gift for others.

Prayer: Help us to consider the needs of the poor, the homeless, and the foreigner. Help us discern what it is that they need and be ready to give it when the opportunity arises.

Saturday, March 28

"Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breathe to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord.'" –

Ezekiel 37:4-6

I can hear that old children's tune... "Dem bones, dem bones, dem dryyyy bones..." But, this passage spells out something really important. God speaks first and that is why we can listen. In fact, he's the one who has given us the ears to hear. If you know the Lord and the simple truths of the gospel, then you can claim these promises as your own. God has breathed life into you and you will live.

Prayer: Thank God for his gracious love to give you new life.

Friday, March 13

"...present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed...that you may discern what is the will of God..." -Romans 12:1-2

Worship isn't just getting the music right! Worship is something that we do with music, with liturgy, fellowship, and our whole life. So, like an Old Testament sacrifice, we lay our lives down and say, "Lord, do what *you* want with my life." It can sort of feel like a child who sits on the floor and cries as soon as he hears that he's not getting his way. It is a sacrifice...it might feel like death at times. But, the Scripture goes on to say that this worship will bring about a transformation in you. We realize that our sacrifice isn't the final word. That God brings life out of death and sacrifice. This will help us "discern what is the will of God," in our day to day lives.

Prayer: Ask God to show you where you have already felt the pain of being a living sacrifice. Pray for the discernment that is talked about that you might be certain of God's will in your life.

Saturday, March 14

But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” -John 4:23-24

Jesus was answering a question regarding the right place to worship God. Was it in Jerusalem? Or on a different mountain with significant religious history? Jesus actually answers beyond what the question could handle. God is up to something different. He is on the search for worshipers. And its not about whether they can make it to the right building. He’s looking for those who worship him in spirit and truth. He’s looking for those with the right heart and the right information.

Prayer: Thank God that he has gathered you as a “spirit-truth” worshiper.

Friday, March 27

Matthew 6:16-17

¹⁶ *“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*

I have a friend who every year at Lent tells me she is giving up candy. So for 40 days she eats NO CANDY and then on Easter Sunday she overloads on candy, and then has an upset stomach for 3 days. Do you give up something for Lent? And if you do, do you tell the whole world “I am giving up (whatever)”? How much easier to just say “no thank you, not right now, maybe later”.

There are many things we should give up: Greed, Envy, Hate, Gossip. We are all guilty of these. But giving up candy is so much easier. How much better for all of us to spend 40 days in prayer for our church, for our leaders, and to pray for strength for what lies ahead?

Let us pray,

Dear Lord give me the courage and the strength to do your will at all times. Please Lord, give me the courage and strength to tell others of what wonderful things you have done. Please give me courage and strength to do and complete the tasks you have set before me. In Jesus name. Amen

-Donna Switzer, Education Committee

Thursday, March 26

Recently, as I was sorting through some old family books, I came across a small, black, rather worn and battered 3-ring notebook. I recognized it as having belonged to my mother, a woman of deep faith. It contained a collection of Christian poetry and prayers. As I read through them, I realized how relevant the messages are today, perhaps 100 years after many of them were written. One of them in particular, moved me very profoundly. The poem, called “Indifference”, was written by an Anglican minister, Geoffrey Stoddard Kennedy, who had served as a chaplain in the trenches of World War I. When he returned to England after the war, he was disheartened by the failure of the church and the upper classes, in the utter neglect of, and disregard for the plight of the poor. One of the lines, “When Jesus Came to Birmingham...” refers to his city, Birmingham in England.

After reading this, one can't help but ponder the question, if Jesus came among us, in this place, today, what might he find?

“Indifference”

When Jesus came to Golgotha, they hanged Him on a tree.
They drove great nails through his hands and feet, and made a Calvary.
They Crowned Him with a crown of thorns, red were his wounds and deep.
For those were crude and cruel days, and human flesh was cheap.
When Jesus came to Birmingham, they simply passed Him by.
They would not hurt a hair of Him, they only let Him die;
For men had grown more tender, and they would not give Him pain,
They only just passed down the street, and left Him in the rain.
Still Jesus cried, ‘Forgive them, for they know not what they do,’
And still it rained the winter rain that drenched Him through and through;
The crowds went home and left the streets without a soul to see.
And Jesus crouched against a wall, and cried for Calvary.

By Geoffrey Stoddard Kennedy

Prayer: Blessings over people who work in homeless shelters, food pantries, jail ministries, and for those people whom they serve.

-Ruth Hofland

Sunday, March 15

“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

– Colossians 3:16

“...one another...” two of the most important words to remember when we become a Christian. Worship for a Christian is not just a solo experience where the believer is worshipping before God by herself. We worship God together with others. In fact, we help our neighbor by reminding them of what is true! “Peace and Grace be with you!” “And also with you!” We come together so that we may all minister to one another as we worship the Lord.

Prayer: Ask the Lord to give you a love for the people beside you in the pews.

Monday, March 16

"...do not neglect to meet together, as is the habit of some..." - Hebrews 10:19-25

Well, it doesn't get much clearer than that! Once God captures us in faith its normal for us to want to come together and worship him. But, there are all sorts of reasons one could find for not coming to church. "I'm too tired." "I've had a bad experience with the church." "I'm ashamed because of a family members addiction." The interest to stay home can be understood. That's why Peter tells Christians, "above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8). God's love certainly has. Now, his love, through us, can continue to repair and mend relationships so that we would be glad to come together for worship.

Prayer: Ask the Lord to give you endurance to continue coming to worship even with all of the trials of life. Is there anyone in your life who needs a loving invitation to join us?

Wednesday, March 25

¹¹For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. ¹²Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. ¹³When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, ¹⁴I will let you find me, says the Lord," (Jeremiah 29:11-13)

A farmer found a little girl that was lost in his meadow. The farmer said to her, "Do not cry; I'll take you home." The little child snuggled up to him, and with a smile, said, "I knew you would; I was waiting for you."

"Waiting for me?" said the man. "What made you think I was coming?"

"I was praying you would." she said.

"Praying? When I first heard you, you were saying A B C D E F G. What was that for?" She looked up again and said, "I'm just a little girl. I was praying all the letters of the alphabet and letting God put them together the way He wanted to. He knew I was lost, and He knew how to put them together better than I did."

When we pray, the LORD already knows our problems, frustrations and concerns. He listens to our prayer even when we don't know what to pray. He intervenes because He wants to give us a life with a future and hope. He reveals Himself to us when we search for Him with all out heart, placing Him first in our lives and what we desire second to His will. He is always listening and as any father he wants to hear what we need.

Lord Jesus, teach us to come to You with all the things that lay heavy upon our hearts and all the things we are thankful for that we may know the abundant life You have to give us. Amen

Tuesday, March 24

"...do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." -Philippians 4:6

I've heard couples use these verses to chastise each other when one is freaking out about something. One will talk about how busy they feel and the other one responds, "you're not supposed to be anxious!" But, this Scripture has more comfort for us than that. The only reason it mentions anxiety is because God knows that we will often find ourselves anxious about what the day requires. There's no need to be ashamed or embarrassed about it. Instead, it's like a check-engine light on the dashboard of your life. Anxiety is that blinking light reminding us to turn again to God in prayer with thanksgiving.

Prayer: Ask God to remind you to turn to him in prayer when you find yourself anxious throughout the day.

Tuesday, March 17

¹¹*Yours, O LORD, are the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is yours; yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all." (1 Chronicles 29:11)*

Johann Sebastian Bach said, "All music should have no other end and aim than the glory of God and the soul's refreshment; where this is not remembered there is no real music but only a devilish hub-bub."

He headed all of his compositions: "J. J.," the initials for, "Jesus Juva" which means "Jesus help me."

He ended them "S.D.G.," the initials for, "Soli Dei Gratia" which means "To God alone be the glory." (Light Steps, Timothy W. Bowes)

I was in Worship and my phone beeped. I thought I better turn that off. When I looked at it to turn it off, it was a report on how much time I spent on my phone in calls, social media, e-mails etc. Then I heard another three phones beep a few seconds later. Here I was in Worship and my phone was reminding me how I spent my time and I had to look, just in case it was important. How often do we come into Worship and we forget we gather to give praise to the one who is LORD over everything! He is victorious overall. His greatness, power, glory, majesty cannot be measured, and we gather to worship Him and praise Him for He alone is God. I looked at my little pathetic phone and decided not to let it run/ruin my life. Jesus is always there to help me, and it is *Soli Dei Gratia* "To God alone be the glory" in all.

Almighty God, remind me daily You desire my worship and thanks for who You are and Your Majesty. Teach me to marvel when I come to You that You would be first in my life and I second. Amen

Wednesday, March 18

“¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. ¹⁷And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Colossians 3:16-17)

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) was present at the Vienna Music Hall, where his oratorio “The Creation” was being performed. Weakened by age, the great composer was confined to a wheelchair. As the majestic work moved along, the audience was caught up with tremendous emotion. When the passage “And there was light!” was reached, the chorus and orchestra burst forth in such power that the crowd could no longer restrain its enthusiasm.

The vast assembly rose in spontaneous applause. Haydn struggled to stand and motioned for silence. With his hand pointed toward heaven, he said, “No, no, not from me, but from thence comes all!” Having given the glory and praise to the Creator, he fell back into his chair exhausted. (Daily Bread, Sept. 20, 1992)

When we worship, we realize that it is about everything in our being. All that we do is laid before Christ. In Worship we realize that every aspect of our being is to reflect His creative and redeeming Word in all that we are. *“Do everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Colossians 3:17)*

Almighty God, may our lives be filled with gratitude in word and deed, giving thanks to You. Amen

Monday, March 23

Matthew 6:5-6

⁵ “And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶ But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Lent is a time of prayer – a time to reflect on your life, your church family and your own personal family. Jesus says to pray unceasing – never to stop praying.

Be thankful in your prayers. Evelyn Henninger at 105 years of age thanked God every morning that she woke up. With that she asked the same question, “what did God want out of her that day?”. I knew her and thanked God for her friendship. I loved her attitude towards life and her reverence for God. I try to do the same thing every day – especially asking God what he wants me to do.

Let us pray,

Dear Lord thank you for this new day. Thank you for my health and for the things I can do. Help me, Lord, to do your work here whatever the task may be. Give me the strength to get it done. Thank you for my church, for leading us and for guiding us. Thank you for sending your Son. In Jesus name I pray.
Amen

-Donna, Switzer, Education Committee

Sunday, March 22

Philippians 4:4-7 NIV Study Bible:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Jesus Christ.

CREED

Lord, for the day 'tis these I ask:
The courage needed for the task;

Lord grant me what strength I'll need
For every large or trivial need;

In some way when shall come the test,
Lord, let me measure to the best;

Lord, this is my hope and this is my prayer,
That in thy purpose I may share.

This I found in my Grandpa's collection of poetry. I could not find an author. Maybe he wrote this, which likely would have been in the early 1900's.

Prayer focus: Start your day in prayer.

Patty Dundas

Thursday, March 19

“Jesus died on a cross that day. When He died, He gave His life to save His people from their sins. In a way, He carried their sin and their guilt. By dying for them, He took the punishment that they deserved for sinning against a holy God—the punishment you and I deserve. He was a King, but He was a servant to His people.” “And do you know what...Jesus didn’t stay dead. He rose again from the grave three days later and He reigns forever with His Father in heaven. That’s the best news of all.” -An excerpt from *The Donkey who carried a King* by R. C. Sproul.

That is the best news of all! Jesus was flesh, he lived among the people, taught them so that they could teach us, and above all He died for all of us. He took the punishment that we deserve for our sins and absorbed them into His death. As R.C. Sproul writes in this book, “Jesus didn’t stay dead.” He rose. He rose to reign forever. He has given us the promise of forgiveness and He promises that one day He will return. What a glorious day that will be!

Prayer suggestion: In your prayers today, include those who need to hear that God forgives us. All we need to do; all they need to do is talk to God. He hears our prayers and He answers them when the time is right.

Melissa Corlett

Friday, March 20

Multiple Blessings in Tough Circumstances (March 1975)

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” -Hebrews 11:1

I had a month of multiple blessings. It was a regular morning and I was making breakfast for my husband. Before he took off for work, he found me passed out in the chair, unresponsive.

Immediately, we took off for a trip to the hospital at 5:30 am. I was put through examinations, tests, and x-rays. The doctors found out that I had a brain hemorrhage. I was put on bed rest and sent to Rochester for further treatment for several days. I had surgery on March 15th. Thank God it was successful and that God allowed us to find out soon enough what was wrong so that something could be done about it.

My Mom came to the city to see me daily as my husband had a job to take care of. My Mom couldn't see well so, with God's help, she made the daily trip from the motel to the hospital. In time, God saw to it that I recovered.

On Saturday we packed up and returned home. As soon as we got home my Mom got sick. Monday morning, my Dad went out to deliver corn seed. When he came back that afternoon, he found a half-prepared banana pie, but no Mom! She was on the couch passed out. Immediately, she was taken to the hospital and received great care from the Dr.'s and nurses. They did all they could, but God knew that it was her time to go. So, the Lord brought her to her heavenly home at 1 am. We thank God for getting us home from Rochester before taking Mom home.

Prayer: Ask the Lord for faith in times when it is hard to see him taking care of you, your family, and friends.

Jeanette Nibaur

Saturday, March 21

“⁸For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light—⁹for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true.¹⁰Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:8-10)

In the 19th century gas lamps were installed in the dark foggy streets of London and other cities. The Lamplighter lit the lamps every night and extinguished them every morning. You could see the figure of a man walking down the street with a long pole with a light on one end. One after another he lit the lamps, illuminating the street and his path.

Jesus said, *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12)* Christ has given us “the light of life,” that as we serve Him, He might reveal to us the depth of His love for us. He continues to speak to us through the Scriptures that we may bear fruit, “all that is good and right and true.” (Ephesians 5:9) That we may see His guidance today and hope for tomorrow.

“let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”
(Matthew 5:15)

Lord, illuminate our paths, in all that is good, right and true that You may guide our lives we may give your glory. Amen