

A watercolor illustration featuring a large, light pink butterfly with soft, blended edges in the background. In the foreground, a branch with small, pointed leaves in shades of brown, orange, and red curves around the text. The overall style is soft and artistic.

*Lent
Meditations*

2019

Foreword

Lent is the period of forty days leading up to Easter. It is a time of reflection, prayer and fasting as we prepare our hearts to commemorate the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. But “Lent” also comes from the Old English word “lencten” which means “spring” – a season that ushers in growth and new beginnings.

In Isaiah 43:16-19, the prophet proclaimed:

This is what the LORD says—

he who made a way through the sea,

a path through the mighty waters...

“Forget the former things;

do not dwell on the past.

See, I am doing a new thing!

Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?

I am making a way in the wilderness

and streams in the wasteland.”

As we set ourselves apart to worship and dig deeper into His Word, we will discover more of who God is; we will remember His mighty works. But may the Holy Spirit also enlighten the eyes of our hearts to understand the incredible greatness of God’s power that is at work within us – the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead...” (Eph 1:19-20).

Our prayer is that this Lent Meditation will point us to Jesus Christ, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, that we may grow into His likeness. In our prayer and surrender to Him, may we increasingly die to ourselves – just as a grain of wheat must die before it can bear fruit (John 12:24). As we abide in Him, may we spring forth to bear much fruit in His mighty power, to our Father’s glory.

Come, Follow, Become Like Jesus!

Juwita Suwito

Chairperson

TRAC Board of Worship & Music



Ash Wednesday, 6 March

Blind Spots

Bible Reading: Isaiah 58:1-12

*"For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that does what is right..."*

Have you ever seen a motorist adjust his mirrors so that he can admire himself rather than see his blind spots? We all know that this defeats the life-saving purpose of rearview mirrors yet at one point or another, we are all inclined to do the very same in our spiritual journey. We worship, we pray, we fast. But ever so often, we set our eyes on how *right* we are, and wonder why God is slow to act.

It was in this scenario that God told Isaiah to declare His people's rebellion. "They're busy, busy, busy at worship, and love studying all about me. To all appearances they're a nation of right-living people..." says *The Message*, and yet they were oblivious to the blind spots in their lives. They overworked their employees; they were quarrelsome and critical; they turned a blind eye to the cries of those around them.

Isaiah 58 tells us that this kind of fasting will never get us anywhere with God. Instead, He is looking for hungry hearts that translate faith into everyday God-inspired living – hearts and lives that He can use to rebuild ancient ruins and "raise up the foundations of many generations" (Isa 58:12, ESV).



What is one blind spot you might have overlooked in your life? What adjustments do you need to make to live a life that fully honours and pleases God?



*Jesus, Word of God, shine
Your light on my blind spots.
Renew my mind and inspire my
heart. Holy Spirit, empower me to
live a life that pleases You. Amen.*



Thursday, 7 March

Life or Death?

Bible Reading: Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Mark 10:17-22

"Therefore, choose life ... (by) loving the LORD your God, obeying Him, and holding fast to Him, for He is your life and length of days ..."

The people of Israel had been miraculously delivered from slave-bondage in Egypt, led through the convoluted wanderings in the desert, and decisively brought to the Promised Land, all by the powerful hand of God. Here they were reminded then that to live well and long in their new homeland, they were to obey the Lord. The Lord will circumcise their hearts that they may love Him with all their heart and soul.

Obedience to the Lord is neither impossible, impracticable nor unachievable. Scripture tells us that "it is not too difficult nor is it beyond your reach". Not difficult here does not mean "easy" but that it is "simple" – not complicated by complex rules or mysterious rituals, accessible only to some. God's word is very near to us as God's presence is with us.

Reminders and commandments are one thing. Obedience is another, and ours to choose. Set before us is life and prosperity against death and adversity. When confronted by Jesus, the rich young man "was shocked and went away grieving" because he had not and would not keep the commandments as Jesus understood them. What will be your choice?



What choices are you making in "getting a life"? Are these choices leading you to God and eternal life, or a life that leads to death? Reflect and pray.



Heavenly Father, thank You for your gracious offer of life in Jesus Christ. May your Word and Spirit enable me to love You and obey You wholeheartedly. Amen.



Friday, 8 March

God is Truth

Bible Reading: Psalm 51:1-10

*"Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,
and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart."*

Our God is the God of Truth. His very nature is Truth (John 14:10), and He delights in Truth.

In today's 'post-truth' world, Truth has diminished in value and it is becoming harder to discern truth from falsehood. Politicians, news sources and the social media invent stories, twist facts and present them to us to fit into our preconceived mindsets. The enemy is having a roaring time deceiving people (including many Christians) with lies and into sin, just like how he deceived David into an adulterous relationship with Bathsheba.

Not knowing the Truth will cause us to fall into sin and remain in sin. When we know we have sinned, we can choose either to ignore it, or repent and confess. When we go to Him in humility and contriteness with confession, God is gracious, merciful and loving, and will forgive our sins, restoring us to a right fellowship with Him.

We need to seek after Truth, and pursue God Himself. We already have His Holy Spirit within us, and He guides us into all the truth (John 16:13) so that we can be free to be the people He has called us to be (John 8:32).



*How can I reduce
the potential of being
deceived? What practical
steps can I take to reduce the
incidences of deception?*



*God, I confess that I have
often been deceived because
I have not sought after Your truth
found in Your Word. Give me a
desire to know You more. Amen.*



Saturday, 9 March

An Undivided Heart

Bible Reading: Psalm 86:1-11

*"Teach me your way, LORD, that I may rely on your faithfulness;
Give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name."*

Prayer is a privilege, a heart-to-heart commune with our Heavenly Father. David, the psalmist, shepherd boy and later King of Israel records this prayer which takes us deep into an intimate outpouring of his need for God to nourish him spiritually, to protect him, to show him mercy and to be blessed with the joy that comes from putting his trust in Adonai, Lord God Almighty. David calls God, "Adonai", seven times in this Psalm.

In submission, David pleaded with His Lord to hear his cries for mercy, love and compassion. He was completely dependent on God for his deliverance and sustenance. We see in David a man of faith who trusted God to forgive and answer him in times of distress. A man who testified to God's marvellous deeds.

What makes this Psalm exceptionally inspiring is the shift in David's focus. His impassioned pleas move from imploring God to hear and provide, to that of being open to God's teaching instead. Prayer gives us new eyes and a changed heart. The more we pray, the more sensitive we become to God's leading. David experienced this spiritual transformation. His earnest prayer now was for a teachable heart that would worship and obey.



Prayer changes us and we learn to surrender fully to God. Evaluate your prayer life and heart's purpose. Review your prayer lists and priorities.



Teach me your Way, Lord, and give me an undivided heart. Change my heart, O God, make it ever true. Change my heart, O God, may I be like you.

1st Sunday, 10 March • Bible Reading: Psalm 91:15a

WHEN THEY CALL ON ME

I will answer





Monday, 11 March

That We Might Know Him Better

Bible Reading: Psalm 19:7-14

*"May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer."*

Creation declares God's glory, but it does not declare His Name. We can know that He exists through creation, but it is only through His Word that we can come to know Him personally and His offer of salvation through Jesus Christ. God's works reveal His knowledge and power but His *Word* reveals His love and grace.

The heavens declare Thy glory, Lord,
In every star Thy wisdom shines;
But when our eyes behold Thy word,
We read Thy name in fairer lines.

– Isaac Watts

"What these two spheres of revelation demand is more than awe in the face of transcendent power, and more than personal delight in the personal, talking God – but both." (D.A. Carson, *For the Love of God*, Vol. II Aug. 15).

Our proper response should be repentance and faith. Because God is holy, we cannot draw close to Him unless we are willing to face our sins and repent. We then pray that God would empower us to make the words of our mouth and the meditation of our heart pleasing in His sight.

May it be our heart's desire to be pure in thought, word and deed.



*God has revealed Himself
in His world and in His
Word. How will you respond?
What will you do to draw near to
Him and to know Him better?*



*Father, ignite in me a deep
longing for You, to want to
know and love You more. Help me
to submit to Your Word and Your
work in my heart. Amen.*



Tuesday, 12 March

Seek Ye First The Kingdom of God

Bible Reading: Isaiah 55:6-11

*"Seek the LORD while he may be found;
call on him while he is near."*

Everyone needs to seek God – some so that they won't be left in the hardness of unbelief and destruction. Others for His special help, guidance and blessing. Believers need to seek Him continually to remain in His love.

We seek God by calling on Him. And, when we do, God may bring to realisation something in our lives that needs to be addressed. If He does, and we refuse to forsake what God condemns, then we cease to seek God, and our words become empty. We cannot seek God where He is not found, in sin. We cannot seek God and continue to practise or plan sin at the same time.

Until we seek the Lord earnestly and honestly, our ways and His ways, our thoughts and His thoughts are as far apart as heaven and earth.

What God is willing to do for us if we seek Him is beyond our imagination. What we will find is not punishment but pardon. It is not a pardon that sends us back to the streets of sin. It is a pardon that is abundant and deep.



How am I seeking God?



*Teach me Lord to seek
first Your Kingdom and
righteousness.*

*Help me to realise that when I do,
all that truly matters will be added.
Amen.*



Wednesday, 13 March

A God of Second Chances

Bible Reading: Jonah 3:1-10

"Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish."

When God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach against its sin, Jonah balked. No one would listen to a nobody like himself! So, Jonah ran!

Can you get away from God? There was a great storm; Jonah was swallowed by a great fish, remaining in the fish's belly for three days. Then, when he repented, the fish vomited him out (Jonah 1 & 2).

Now, safe on dry land, God repeats His command to Jonah: Go to Nineveh and preach against it. Jonah's response this time was complete obedience. He goes to Nineveh; he tells them that the city would be overturned due to their sin.

Amazingly, the Ninevites believed him! The king declared a city-wide fast and commanded urgent prayer so that God, in His compassion, might relent.

Did the Ninevites believe Jonah's message because they had heard of how he had come back to life after spending three days in the fish's belly?

When the Pharisees and Sadducees asked Jesus for a sign from heaven, He answered, "No sign shall be given, but the sign of the Prophet Jonah" (Matt 12:39). Like Jonah, Jesus died, was entombed and then rose again to life.



God forgave Jonah. He forgave the Ninevites.

*What is God's command to you?
Have you been running away?*

Do you need a second chance?



*Father, I have not
obeyed your command to*

*_____. I repent;
please speak to me again. Who do
you want to send me to, Lord? I will
go. Amen.*



Thursday, 14 March

Pray, Wait, Give Thanks

Bible Reading: Psalm 138

"Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life. You stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes; with your right hand you save me."

While the preceding psalm was a cry for help, Psalm 138 is a psalm of thanksgiving for answered prayer. The writer of this Psalm shows us in verse 2 that God's nature is reason enough to thank and praise Him, despite the circumstances that surround us.

It may seem at this time that the Lord has forgotten you. There does not seem to be any progress whatsoever from a seemingly hopeless situation in your life. But nothing could be further from the truth. The psalmist shows us in verses 3 and 7 that God answers our prayers by delivering us from the pursuit of our enemies.

But what do we do in between the points of Cry for Help and Answered Prayer? We wait. We trust Him. We live by faith. We worship in our pain. As the Psalmist discovered, it is the Lord who preserved his life even in the midst of trouble.

Because the Lord loves you, He will fulfil His purpose for you. Wait upon Him. Don't be in a hurry. Rest assured that God knows your every need and He will do what He has promised. Put your hope therefore in God.



What experiences in prayer have taught you about God's love and assured you of His attention to your problems? What can you give thanks to God for today?



Father, forgive me for being anxious. Give me the grace to trust You and wait upon You. Please lead me and preserve me. Amen.



Friday, 15 March

Out of the Miry Clay

Bible Reading: Psalm 130

*"If you, LORD, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand?
But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you."*

All of us live under the pall of sinfulness. Often, when we are mired in temporal and spiritual trouble; the depth of our distress moves the depths of our being; and an exceedingly great and bitter cry rises to God.

We acknowledge that free, full, sovereign pardon is permanently resident with God. None fear the Lord like those who have experienced His forgiving love. Gratitude for pardon produces far more fear and reverence of God than all the dread which is inspired by punishment. It is grace which leads the way to a holy regard of God, and a fear of grieving him.

Sometimes, when we cry out, God makes us wait. Let us do so with our whole heart. He is worth waiting for. The waiting itself is beneficial: it tries faith, exercises patience, trains submission, and endears the blessing when it finally comes.

To wait on God is to live expectantly, with an awareness of how God has acted in the past and with keen anticipation of what God is about to do. It is the opposite of despair and hopelessness. The certainty of what is to come makes it all worthwhile.



*Am I living my Christian
life as one who is fully
pardoned?*



*Thank you Lord for bringing
me out of the miry clay.
Thank you Lord for setting my feet
on the Rock to stay. Thank you for
putting a song in my soul today.*



Saturday, 16 March

Blessed Obedience

Bible Reading: Psalm 119:1-8

"I will praise you with an upright heart as I learn your righteous laws."

Reminiscent of the blessed pilgrim in Psalm 1 whose delight is in the law of the Lord, Psalm 119 bears similarities of a blessed life for those who walk in the law of the Lord. Believers who keep God's Word and seek the Lord with all their heart are truly blessed. They are known by the way they walk and by the nature of their actions.

Obedience and a heart of devotion are intricately tied to the whole action of walking in the law. The act of walking encompasses the actions of believers and active engagement with the Word. An immersion of heart, mind and will leads to a life of integrity, happiness and blessings. God's call of obedience and worship, of close fellowship with Him come as a result of a faith firmly rooted in His Word.

The psalmist recognizes his own faint spirit and yearns for a more steadfast life of faith and obedience. He breaks out in a joyous response of praise as he correlates the truth of a whole and undivided heart as we walk daily in obedience to the will of God. Learning God's Word produces an upright heart which is fully responsive to God's holy teaching.



*Reading God's Word
leads to spiritual
transformation and obedience.
How much of your life at present
is directed by knowing and
learning from God's Word?*



*Lord, I yearn to hide your
Word in my heart, and to obey
you with faith and devotion. Use my
life for your glory. Amen.*

2nd Sunday, 17 March • Bible Reading: Genesis 15:6

ABRAM BELIEVED THE LORD



AND HE CREDITED IT TO HIM AS

Righteousness



Monday, 18 March

A Prayer of Confession

Bible Reading: Daniel 9:3-10; Psalm 103

*“Open shame falls on us, our kings, our officials, our ancestors,
because we have sinned against You.”*

Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians, and the people of Israel were then exiled to Babylon for seventy years (Jer 29:10). In exile, recognising their blame, they prayed for forgiveness.

As they gazed into His holiness, they were confronted by their sinfulness. Scripture describes human sin against God in a multitude of ways – wrongdoing, acting wickedly, rebellion, turning aside from God’s commandments, treachery, and disobedience. They were moved to confess not just with lips but with fasting, sackcloth and ashes as a show of their contrition that they could have spurned a gracious God who had delivered them out of slavery.

Sin separates us from God. To make right that relationship with God, we need to acknowledge our sin, confess them and make the necessary life changes that reflect genuine repentance. And rest assured, “The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbour his anger forever... For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us (Psa 103:8-12).”



*Meditate on the many
different words that
Scripture uses to describe sin
and mirror them to your life.
Reflect and pray.*



*Father, thank You that You
love me but hate sin. Forgive
me for not listening to You. Help me
live a life that gives you glory. Amen.*



Tuesday, 19 March

Jesus Christ, Son of David, Son of God

Bible Reading: 2 Samuel 7:4,8-16

*"Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before Me;
Your throne will be established forever."*

David desires to build a temple for the Lord, but God tells him otherwise. Instead, the task would be Solomon's, David's own son, and God Himself would build a house and a kingdom for David's line that will endure forever.

*"I have sworn to David my servant,
'I will establish your line forever
and make your throne firm through all generations.'"*

—Psalm 89:3-4

The angel announced to Mary that her Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit *"will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David... and His kingdom will never end."*

Jesus Christ, Son of David, Son of God, is the ultimate fulfilment of God's covenant of grace to David revealed. He is the promise to David and his descendants, the unfolding of the plan of redemption for the nation of Israel and all mankind. This same Jesus will come again in the clouds with power and glory; and establish His everlasting Kingdom that will never end.



*Do you see Jesus as your
coming King? The day is
coming when He will descend
again in power and in glory. Do
you look to His Second Coming?*



*Lord Jesus, help me to live
my life in the hope of Your
second coming. Purify me and keep
me ever watchful and prayerful.
Amen.*



Wednesday, 20 March

What Kind of Clay Are You?

Bible Reading: Jeremiah 18:1-10, 18-20

*"But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands;
so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him."*

The clay is in the hands of the potter to shape it as he deems fit and proper. The final product is dependent on the type and quality of the clay he has in his hands. The potter obviously wants to produce the best and most beautiful piece of pottery he can from the clay he has at his disposal.

God's desire is that His children will grow into His likeness to be people who love and worship Him in deed and in character. He uses the situations in life to mold and shape us to be more and more like Jesus. How we react to life's circumstances thrown at us will determine when this shaping process will be easy, difficult or needs to be redone.

Our reactions are also dependent on our perceptions of God – who He is – His nature and character. Do we believe that:

- God loves us and wants the best for us?
- God cannot make a mistake with our lives?
- God is in absolute control of everything around us?



What kind of clay are you? Soft, hard, moist, dry, fine, coarse? How do the different types of clay affect the final outcome? How does this relate to me?



Lord, I confess that I am often like hard clay, difficult to shape because of my pride. Keep my heart ever open to Your wisdom and correction. Amen.



Day 14

Thursday, 21 March

The Pursuit of Happiness

Bible Reading: Psalm 1

*"Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers,
but whose delight is in the law of the LORD..."*

"I just want to be happy!" Don't most people pursue that feel-good experience that we call "happiness"? This first Psalm presents two Paths to Happiness: the way of Righteousness; the way of the Wicked.

True happiness has to be based on Truth. And the source of Truth is "the Law of the Lord". Beautiful insights from God's Word will bring real joy – "strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow". Meditating on God's Word, we will be like trees "planted by streams of water": growing strong and producing fruit in season.

The man who seeks true blessedness must not be influenced by the wicked ways of the worldly. He must not depend on the advice from Godless people, or find fulfilment or entertainment in ungodly pursuits.

Jesus, praying for us, said, "I have given them Your Word and the world has hated them, for they are not of this world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that You take them out of this world but that You protect them from the evil one... Sanctify them by the truth; Your Word is truth." (John 17:14,15,17)



*Is it difficult for you to
remain in the world but
not be a part of it?*



*Father God, please help me
delight in Your Word. Teach
me how to set myself apart from
this world and yet impact it for Your
Glory. Amen.*



Friday, 22 March

Dreams, Detours, Destiny

Bible Reading: Genesis 37: 3-4, 12-28

*"Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns
and say that a ferocious animal devoured him.
Then we'll see what comes of his dreams."*

Joseph was the favourite son of Jacob. He presented him with a beautiful robe. Such instances of favouritism must have contributed to jealousy among his brothers, which ultimately led to their plotting to kill him in the wilderness. In the end, they sold him into slavery to a traveling caravan of Midianite merchants.

There is much to learn from Joseph's story. Joseph was labelled a dreamer by his brothers, but we see the fruition of his dreams at the end of Genesis. How does a 17-year-old dreamer, an obedient son loved by his father, who had everything going for him, get his dreams derailed and end up as a slave in a single day? Yet, God had a divine purpose for Joseph. The long and painful detours in his life ultimately led him to a place of destiny in God.

Jesus Christ's ultimate destiny to bring salvation to mankind took place against a backdrop of suffering, persecution and even death on the Cross. Let us be encouraged by Jesus' example of trusting and obeying God even in the very things that sought to derail and detour Him.



*Have your dreams been
derailed by painful detours
along your Christian journey?
Like Joseph, do you see the
hand of God leading you to your
destiny?*



*Father, I bring my broken
dreams to You. Help me
to keep my faith in You in all my
detours. Direct me to my destiny in
You. Amen.*



Saturday, 23 March

Hope for a Wondrous Restoration

Bible Reading: Micah 7:14-15, 18-20

*"Shepherd, O God, your people with your staff, your dear and precious flock.
Let them graze in lush Bashan as in the old days in green Gilead."*

Sheep grazing in a forest, in the middle of the coastal mountain range of Carmel, which literally means God's vineyard. Micah paints this imagery to reflect the state of his people. Their sin had reduced them to a backwoods remnant. Though they were still covered by God's providence, they were a far cry from the life God had intended for them.

But Micah doesn't just lament about the condition of his nation. He confesses on their behalf. He longs for the day when its cities would be rebuilt, when its borders would be extended, when honour would return to his land. He calls upon the Shepherd to lead His flock out of the woods into fertile pastures. And the Shepherd answers! He promises to show them astounding things, as He did when He miraculously brought His people out of Egypt.

"I am the Good Shepherd," says Jesus in John 10. A matchless Shepherd who does not abandon His sheep but laid down His life so that we may be restored to a flourishing relationship with Him. He wants to give us an overflowing life so that we may be a blessing to all the peoples of the earth.



Is there a situation in your community that seems dark and hopeless? Bring it to God. Intercede. Stand in the gap. Claim His promises.



Thank You for Your mercy, O Lord. Break the power of sin in my life. Please restore me. Help me to be fruitful so that I may bless others. Amen.

3rd Sunday, 24 March • Bible Reading: Luke 13:6-9

Lord, give it one more chance





Monday, 25 March

Listen, Forget, Honour

Bible Reading: Psalm 45

“Listen, daughter, and pay careful attention:

Forget your people and your father’s house.

Let the King be enthralled by your beauty; honour him, for he is your Lord.”

Psalm 45, a messianic psalm, is a beautiful wedding song written for a king. Just like a bride who adores her groom, we are reminded in this psalm of the matchless beauty of the King in admiring praise.

Why did the psalmist in verse 10 instruct the bride to listen? What did he want her to pay careful attention to? Today, we hear different voices and are constantly surrounded by many distractions. God wants us to pause to listen to Him.

God encourages us in Isaiah 43:18 to forget the former things and not dwell on the past. We should let go of our earthly heritage as we enter into the divine marriage with the Eternal One. As we continue to draw near to Him, we will be blessed by the One whom we are seeking.

We are to honour our Groom because He is our Lord. To honour means to please God and love Him with all our hearts. It is to earnestly desire and seek after God above all else in this world until He becomes all that we could ever want or need. It means the giving of our whole life as an instrument for doing God’s will.



As you pause to listen to His still small voice, what is God saying to you? Have you left everything to follow Him? How can you honour God today?



Father, thank You for the reminder that I am to follow Christ, my Lord and King. Help me to seek after You, more than anything else in this life. Amen.



Tuesday, 26 March

How Well Do You Know Your God?

Bible Reading: Psalm 25:3-10

*"All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful
toward those who keep the demands of his covenant."*

Our faith in anything or anyone is only as strong as our how well we know the object of our faith. What or who are the objects of our faith? Family, friends, government, society, technology, and material wealth – they will all fail us sooner or later; because they are not perfect.

Only God is perfect and fully dependable and will not fail us. If He did, He would no longer be God. He wants the very best for each one of His children, though at times, it may seem the opposite. Just like a child who thinks negatively of a parent's discipline, which is meant for the good and future of the child.

If we are committed to following Jesus, we can be assured that all of God's ways are good all the time. The psalmist reminds us in this passage that:

- God protects us
- God guides us
- God is our teacher
- God is steadfast in His love
- God is truth
- God is our hope
- God is merciful
- God is love
- God is forgiving
- God is good
- God is upright
- God is righteous
- God is faithful



*Spend some time
reflecting on the character
of God listed above.*

*Which characteristic stands out
for you? Why?*



*I thank you, God, that You are
_____. Help me to
know You more intimately each day.
Amen.*



Wednesday, 27 March

Listen. Obey. Enter the Promised Land!

Bible Reading: Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 5-9

"Follow them so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land the LORD, the God of your ancestors, is giving you."

From the creation of man to the end of time, God's desire has always been for us to live fruitful and victorious lives, full of wisdom and understanding; in close fellowship with Him. Yet too often, having been set free from the yoke of slavery, we settle for the wilderness – the land in which we are provided for, but doesn't quite flow with milk and honey, or bear much fruit. We celebrate our crossing of the Red Sea but shy away from the promised land.

"Just obey the commands of the Lord your God," said Moses to the people of God as they camped in the wilderness east of the Jordan. Due to their previous generation's disobedience, they had been wandering for 40 years in a journey that should have taken 11 days. Now, they were poised to cross the Jordan with Joshua, their new leader. They had already begun to see a new wave of God's deliverance and after a long, long wait, they finally had a second chance to take ownership of the land of their inheritance. All they had to do was listen, obey, and God would be with them.

Would they do just that? Would we?



Listen to what God is saying to you. Obey. Take that step of faith. Know that He is with you.



Lord, keep me close to You. Help me to follow Your lead and walk in Your promises, that I may have the richest experience of Your presence in my life. Amen.



Thursday, 28 March

Worship – Ritual or Right Living?

Bible Reading: Jeremiah 7:23-28; Romans 12:1-2

“Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but, in the stubbornness of their evil will, they walked in their own counsels, and looked backwards rather than forwards.”

For many, worship is a ritual they participate in once a week and they consider it enough to please God. The Israelites thought the same. They offered sacrifices and burnt offerings at the temple, yet God was not pleased, because they continued in their old ways – “to steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods” (Jer 7:9). They failed to “amend their ways and doings, to act justly, to not oppress the alien, the orphan and the widow” (Jer 7:5-6).

There was a gross disconnect between their worship and how they lived their lives. Their so-called worship was dramatic play-acting, a sham! Despite repeated reminders, they did not incline their ear to God but persisted in their evil wills, and further stiffened their necks.

When we worship God, we also choose to live His way. The apostle Paul explains that in worship we offer ourselves as a living sacrifice to God. In so doing, we die to self, and allow our minds to be transformed and renewed. Our lives no longer conform to the pattern of this world. It should never be business as usual if we worship God “in spirit and in truth”.



How does your Sunday worship affect the way you live your life Monday to Saturday? Reflect and pray.



Father, thank You for the privilege of worshipping You. I repent from my sinful ways of living. Help me to live Your way. Amen.



Friday, 29 March

Return on His Terms

Bible Reading: Hosea 14:1-9

*"Return, Israel, to the LORD your God. Your sins have been your downfall!
Take words with you and return to the LORD."*

The message of Hosea is fundamentally a reminder for the people of Israel of who they are, and a call for them to return to God as His sons and daughters – a message that is as relevant for God's people today.

"Bruised and broken by the fall," Hosea tells them to *"Take words with you and return to the LORD"* (Hosea 14:2).

However, the return to God must be on His terms and not ours. It isn't enough to feel repentance before the Lord. Instead, take words with you and tell God you repent before Him. God commands us to communicate with Him in words, not only ideas or feelings.

God says, "When you return to Me, take words with you. I want you to return to Me not with a silent thought in your heart, but with proper words of repentance and trust in Me."

When we return to the Lord, taking words with us, we renounce our dependence on all other things. We recognize that the Lord alone can make a difference in our life.

When we return to the Lord, taking words with us, we declare His greatness. We acknowledge His goodness and grace.



*How often have we
dictated terms to God
even while we are seeking His
forgiveness?*



Dear Lord,

*"Not because of who I am, but
because of what You've done.*

*Not because of what I've done, but
because of who You are."*¹

¹ Mark Hall (Casting Crowns), *Who Am I*



Saturday, 30 March

True Repentance

Bible Reading: Hosea 6:1-6

"For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgement of God rather than burnt offerings."

The priests said that God had punished Israel because they had wandered away from Him. They should, therefore, accept the punishment and return to the Lord; they had to turn away from their idols, and acknowledge only Yahweh. Then, He would forgive them, and restore them, so they could live in His Presence.

What is true repentance? Were the priests really sorry for their sin? God reminded them that repentance should not be like morning mist or dew, which evaporates as soon as it appears. Repentance should also be more than ritualistic acts. It involves a genuine change of heart. When this happens, good deeds will follow.

What is the result of true repentance? Jesus, in His parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-24) shows us the forgiving and loving heart of God. The son had despised his father and behaved wretchedly. However, when he repented, returned to his father and asked for forgiveness, the father welcomed him with great rejoicing and celebration!



Have you truly recognized the way you have sinned against God? Have you truly repented? What evidence is there in your life to show your change of heart?



Lord, bring to my mind the ways I have sinned against You. Help me to be genuinely repentant and truly change my heart and my deeds. Amen.

4th Sunday, 31 March • Bible Reading: 2 Cor 5:17

CREATED ANEW IN

Christ

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17





Monday, 1 April

Redeemed and Restored

Bible Reading: Isaiah 65:17-25

*"See, I will create new heavens and a new earth.
The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind."*

The people of Israel had returned to their land after being in Exile by Babylon. Far from a joyous homecoming, the scars from the years of banishment and oppression in a foreign land were ingrained deeper when they saw the destruction of Israel. It bore little resemblance to the land flowing with milk and honey which they remembered. Through Isaiah the prophet, God brought consolation to His beloved people with a promise of new heavens and a new earth, forgiveness of all things past and a future of joy restored.

God's promise of redemption would bring forth peace and harmony, far beyond what anyone could possibly imagine. Isaiah illustrated this with a utopian vision of the wolf and the lamb feeding together, and the lion eating straw like the ox. These also foreshadow the promise of the Messiah in Isaiah 11:6-9.

For the believing heart, there is a glorious future of security, and close communion with the Lord. A sweeping transformation of the physical universe and a renewed relationship between Almighty God and His people. The coming Christ, the Prince of Peace, Saviour and Redeemer.

God promises His people eternal reconciliation and joy.



*Do you believe that
through Jesus Christ,
we are now a redeemed and
restored generation, receiving a
new slate to write the chapters
of our lives?*



*Eternal God, thank you for
redeeming me and filling me
with joy. I surrender myself to you.
May Christ be seen and glorified in
my life. Amen.*



Tuesday, 2 April

The River of Life

Bible Reading: Ezekiel 47:1-9,12

"Where the river flows everything will live."

Zechariah refers to *living waters* that will flow out from Jerusalem, and the Apostle John speaks of *the river of the water of life* flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb in the New Jerusalem. Wherever this water flows, it makes things live; both plants and animals.

This river of the water of life, this water that makes things live, brings transformation from death to life and barrenness to fruitfulness. From this river there is *"new life and new beauty; new food and new fruit; new healing and new health; unfailing supply and unfading freshness!"* (Baxter, J. Sidlow, *Awake My Heart*, Jan 15).

Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters. *"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink,"* Jesus says. The water that He gives will become a spring of life-giving water welling up to eternal life, and a life that is meaningful and abundant. If you would yield to Him and keep your heart open to the touch of the Holy Spirit in your life, rivers of living water will flow from within you to bless a thirsty world.



Are you drinking daily from the river of the water of life? Are streams of living water flowing from your heart to bless a thirsty world?



Father, I want to quench my thirst only from the fountain of living water found in Jesus Christ. I want to live my life for Your glory. Amen.



Wednesday, 3 April

O for a Heart to Praise My God

Bible Reading: Psalm 145:8-19

“You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.”

Psalm 145 is David's final prayer of praise in the entire collection of 150 Psalms. Probably recited twice in the morning and once in the evening according to Jewish practice, Psalm 145 captures David's walk with God through tough battles, his sinful exploits, the humbling encounters of God's forgiveness and his exuberant soul-filled praise which testified to God's glorious splendour.

It is David's final testament of the universal goodness of God in all of creation. God is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all. David calls God King and celebrates in praise of God's majesty and love.

Through David's personal testimony, he points us to a God who fulfils all his promises, a God whom we can count on. God is there to pick us up when we fall, He gives encouragement to the downtrodden and is Jehovah Jireh, our Provider.

God seeks out His beloved, holds us in the palm of His hand. He is all embracing, holy and righteous. Through generations past, God has been an ever-living Presence, dwelling with his chosen people.

Our King of Glory, Sovereign Lord is also Abba Father, our Provider and the Shepherd of our souls!



Take time to marvel at the glory of creation and reflect on God's goodness through the years. What would be your Song of Praise? With an open heart, write your Psalm.



Thank you Abba for every new dawn that enriches us with a deeper experience of your Eternal Presence. Keep us humble, keep us grateful. Amen.



Thursday, 4 April

Love God, Love His People

Bible Reading: Exodus 32:7-14

"Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them..." But Moses sought the favour of the LORD his God."

Imagine a 40-day, 40-night mountaintop experience in a cloud of God's glory, receiving a blueprint to turn a rebellion of slaves into a holy nation. Moses was just coming out of such a cloud with two tablets of stone in his arms. It contained God's covenant law, inscribed by His own finger.

Then Moses heard these words. "Go down, because your people... have become corrupt." "They are a stiff-necked people," God declared. It is the first time we hear that familiar term, and it could have very well been the last too, for God went on to tell Moses to leave Him alone so that He might destroy the Israelites in His anger and start afresh with Moses' own family.

In a rude prick of a bubble, Moses was now confronted with the option of abandoning his flock of whining followers to make his *own* name great. But he remembered his calling (Exodus 3). He sought the favour of the Lord and pleaded for His people. He desired that God's name be glorified and not his own. He knew that to truly love God, one must love His people.



Have you ever felt like giving up on the people God has entrusted you with? Go back to Him. Remember your calling. Ask Him to make it clear to you.



Lord, thank you for Your calling upon my life. I want to live for Your glory. Help me to love Your people as You do, for Your name's sake. Amen.



Friday, 5 April

My Rock and My Redeemer

Bible Reading: Psalm 34:15-22

*"The LORD redeems His servants;
no one will be condemned who takes refuge in Him."*

To take refuge in Him is to trust in Him. God calls us to a life of faith, and to experience His abundant provision, care and protection. The life God blesses starts with a broken and a contrite heart that drives us to the Lord in repentance.

The blessing is the favour of the Lord, for His eyes are on the righteous, and His ears are attentive to their cry. Faith in the Lord does not offer immunity from adversity, for many are the afflictions of the righteous. He does not deliver us from troubles, but He delivers us out of them.

It is a great blessing to be delivered from our troubles, and a greater blessing to be protected by the Lord, but the greatest blessing is drawing near to God and enjoying His presence.

We do not seek Your hand
We only seek Your face
We want to know You
We want to see You
Reveal Your glory in this place

– Paul Wilbur, *Let the Weight of Your Glory Fall*

"Only when His love and presence touch our hearts can we really know Him in His unspeakable goodness." – G. Campbell Murdoch



*Are you broken and
contrite in spirit, one
who takes refuge in Him? What
should you do today to be
righteous before God?*



*Lord Jesus, thank you for
being my Rock and my
Redeemer. You are my all in all and
I enthrone you in my heart. Amen.*



Saturday, 6 April

Innocent or Guilty?

Bible Reading: Psalm 7:6-11

*“Judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness
and according to the integrity that is in me.”*

Psalm 7 is an individual petition that begins with the psalmist taking refuge, perhaps in the Temple, and taking an oath of innocence. An innocent person could claim sanctuary at the altar, though an oath of innocence involved risk if one did not tell the truth. The psalmist had been falsely accused by Cush, a Benjamite, perhaps representing a group of enemies.

To clear his name, instead of a human court, the psalmist went straight to the highest court, to the Lord who judges the peoples. In so doing, he took quite a risk because he was now facing the Judge who probes minds and hearts, and before whom “no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account” (Heb 4:13). Before this impartial Judge who knows and sees all, he sought to plead his innocence and integrity.

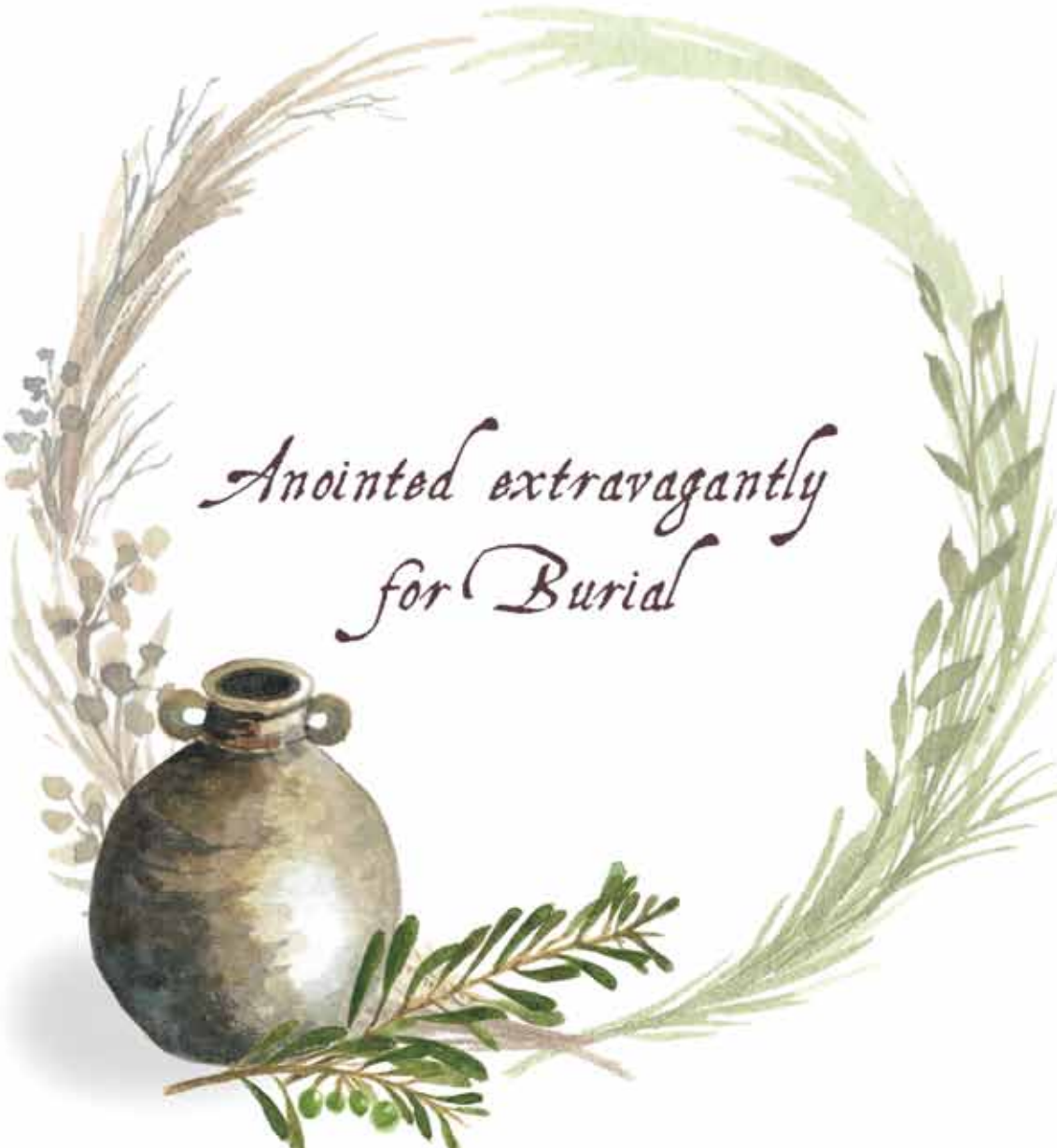
For the innocent, God will be a shield, a defender, a saviour. However, for the wicked, He will be the judge-warrior whose sword will cut down and whose arrows will kill. No escape for those who conceive evil. They will face God’s indignation every day.



*How will you fare before
the court of God? As he
probes your mind and heart,
what will he find? Reflect and
pray.*



*“Search me, O God, and
know my heart; test me and
know my thoughts. See if there is
any wicked way in me and lead me
in the way everlasting.” Amen.*



*Anointed extravagantly
for Burial*

*She has done a beautiful thing
...For you will not always have Me.*



Monday, 8 April

The Good Shepherd

Bible Reading: Psalm 23

"The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing."

David, the shepherd-turned-king, saw God as his Shepherd, and himself a dependent sheep. Sheep follow their shepherd because he protects them and guides them to lush pastures. David used his rod to ward off predators and smack his sheep when they were stubborn. He used his staff, with its hooked end, to guide or rescue his sheep when they fell into a pit. So, David felt comforted at the thought of the Rod and Staff of his All-powerful, All-loving Shepherd. He felt safe even in "the valley of the shadow of death".

But there is more: David knew that his Shepherd would not only keep him safe and well fed; He would lead him "in paths of righteousness" (sometimes applying the rod), restoring his soul after he had fallen, and giving him a special anointing to serve Him better. His life would always be filled with "goodness and love".

What joy to know that Jesus is our Good Shepherd! He said, "I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me – just as the Father knows me and I know the Father – and I lay down my life for the sheep." (John 10:14)



Do you have the same kind of "Shepherd-Sheep" relationship to Jesus? Go through the Psalm. Think about how God does for you all the things that David described.



*Lord, thank you for being my Good Shepherd.
Today, I especially need you to*



Tuesday, 9 April

Impatience, Complaints and Grumbings

Bible Reading: Numbers 21:4-9

*"The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we spoke
against the LORD and against you..."*

The Bible records the events of the Israelites' journey out of Egypt with much detail on the many encounters where God revealed Himself and His great power. They saw for themselves how God protected and led them, and how He provided for their daily needs. Yet they were often impatient, frequently complaining and grumbling about how life would have been better off back in Egypt. If not for the interventions of Moses and Aaron, God would have destroyed the Israelites in the desert.

Our God is a personal God. He loves us and knows our individual needs. His dealings with us are always perfect – circumstances, timing and purpose. He does not make any mistakes and knows exactly what He is doing. When we get impatient, complaining or grumbling about other people or the situations we are in, we are essentially speaking out against God. We are saying that God has made a mistake. We are implying that He is not keeping His promises and is therefore a liar. This is considered a sin.



*Do I often complain
especially when I can't get
what I want?*

*Do I think that God has made
some mistakes in my life, or that
He could have done better?*



*Lord, I confess that I have
been impatient, complaining
and grumbling. Help me to extend
the same grace that You have
shown me, towards others. Amen.*



Day 31

Wednesday, 10 April

Standing Firm till The End

Bible Reading: Daniel 3:14-20,24-28

*“... the God we serve is able to deliver ... But even if he does not,
... we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.*

God's nation suffered defeat and destruction, appearing as though the gods of their victors were in control and that Yahweh was dead – unable to help his persecuted people. Daniel's book seeks to convince believers that God controls history even in the worst of times and that the persecution of believers is a call to faithfulness.

Nebuchadnezzar had issued a law that all people should bow to this great image he had built. The three young men, in their obedience to God, refused. They further announced that even if God did not deliver them, they would still not serve the gods of Nebuchadnezzar. They knew their God was the true God, and nothing else would take His place.

The highest form of worship is when we choose to honour God even at the face of death, as seen in Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Faith in God does not mean that God will remove every problem from us. Will we still be faithful to God even when troubles persist with nary a solution? Can we still honour God even if the fig tree fails to blossom, or in the face sickness and even death?



Will you obey God no matter what sacrifices it requires? Will you still be faithful to God even if no one else is?



Father, when persecution offers me an easy way out of trouble, give me courage to stand firm till the end. May I honour You in every decision I make. Amen.



Thursday, 11 April

Be Blameless

Bible Reading: Genesis 17:1-8

"When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless.'"

More than 10 years had passed since God last communicated with Abram. During that time, we can assume that Abram continued a "normal" fellowship with God while waiting for *the* promise to come. Surely, at times, Abram must have felt that God had forgotten about him.

Nonetheless, Abram was becoming a great man of faith. His faith did not spring up overnight. It took years of almost mundane trusting in God.

Now God appeared to him again. Instead of "*do not be afraid*," He said, "*I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless*." This was God's command to Abram, and a direction for conduct which demanded total commitment.

To "walk before the Lord faithfully" does not mean taking literal steps. It involves making prayerful decisions for every move we make. Just as He had commanded Abram, the Lord asks each of us today to be holy and blameless because – as His followers – we bear the name of Christ.

When we fail to be holy, others see our wrongdoings and they make their value judgments on God based on our conduct. Therefore, the Lord instructs each of us to walk before Him and be blameless.



Reflect: To be blameless is to be faithful to God in all your ways. Are you faithful to God?



Lord, help me to leave behind a heritage of faithfulness. May all who come behind me find me faithful. Amen.



Friday, 12 April

Fools for Christ

Bible Reading: Jeremiah 20:7-13; 1 Corinthians 4:1-13

"But if I say, "Forget it! No more God-Messages from me!"

The words are fire in my belly, a burning in my bones.

I'm worn out trying to hold it in. I can't do it any longer!" (The Message)

Wanted: Spokesman for God.

Qualities: Passion for God, thick skin, fearless.

Remuneration: None.

Perks: Possible death.

Job specs: Work 24/7.

Instructions will be given on the fly.

Would you apply? The prophet Jeremiah was mocked by everyone, denounced by his hearers, and even his close friends were watching for him to stumble. And every time he opened his mouth, it was doomsday on behalf of GOD, and all he received were more insults. His message so enraged the people that they were just waiting to get rid of him for good.

With so much stacked against him, Jeremiah protested, "You pushed me into this, God! But if I say, "No more God-Messages from me!" the words are fire in my belly, a burning in my bones. I'm worn out trying to hold it in. I can't do it any longer!"

Those whom God has set His hand upon, He does not desert. God reminded Jeremiah that He would be a fierce warrior by his side, defeating his enemies. Jeremiah was to remain faithful to the work the Lord had given him. And as that reality hit home, Jeremiah could joyfully sing, "Praise the LORD!"



As a Christian, committed to live and speak for God, how are you like Jeremiah? Reflect and pray.



Dear God, may the fire you place in me burn strong despite what the world may say and do. May the joy of the Lord be my strength, each day. Amen.



Saturday, 13 April

A New Covenant

Bible Reading: Ezekiel 37:21-28

*"My dwelling place will be with them;
I will be their God, and they will be my people."*

God gives a message of hope to the dispersed Israelites of a new everlasting covenant that they will be reunited back under an everlasting king, who will dwell with them. At first glance, it appears that it refers to the physical re-establishment of Israel as a nation. However, God refers beyond the physical re-establishment of Israel to the spiritual Israel; where God's chosen people will be united, obedient and faithful with Jesus as the eternal King.

In this new covenant, God has declared that He will be our God and we will be His people, and He will dwell in our midst. As God, He will be our Protector, our Provider, our Deliverer, our Guide; wanting the best for His people. As His people, we need to be faithful and obedient to Him and His ways; forsaking all other "idols" that will take our focus off Him. And, He has also given us His Holy Spirit, who lives in each of us.



*What do the following
statements mean to you:*

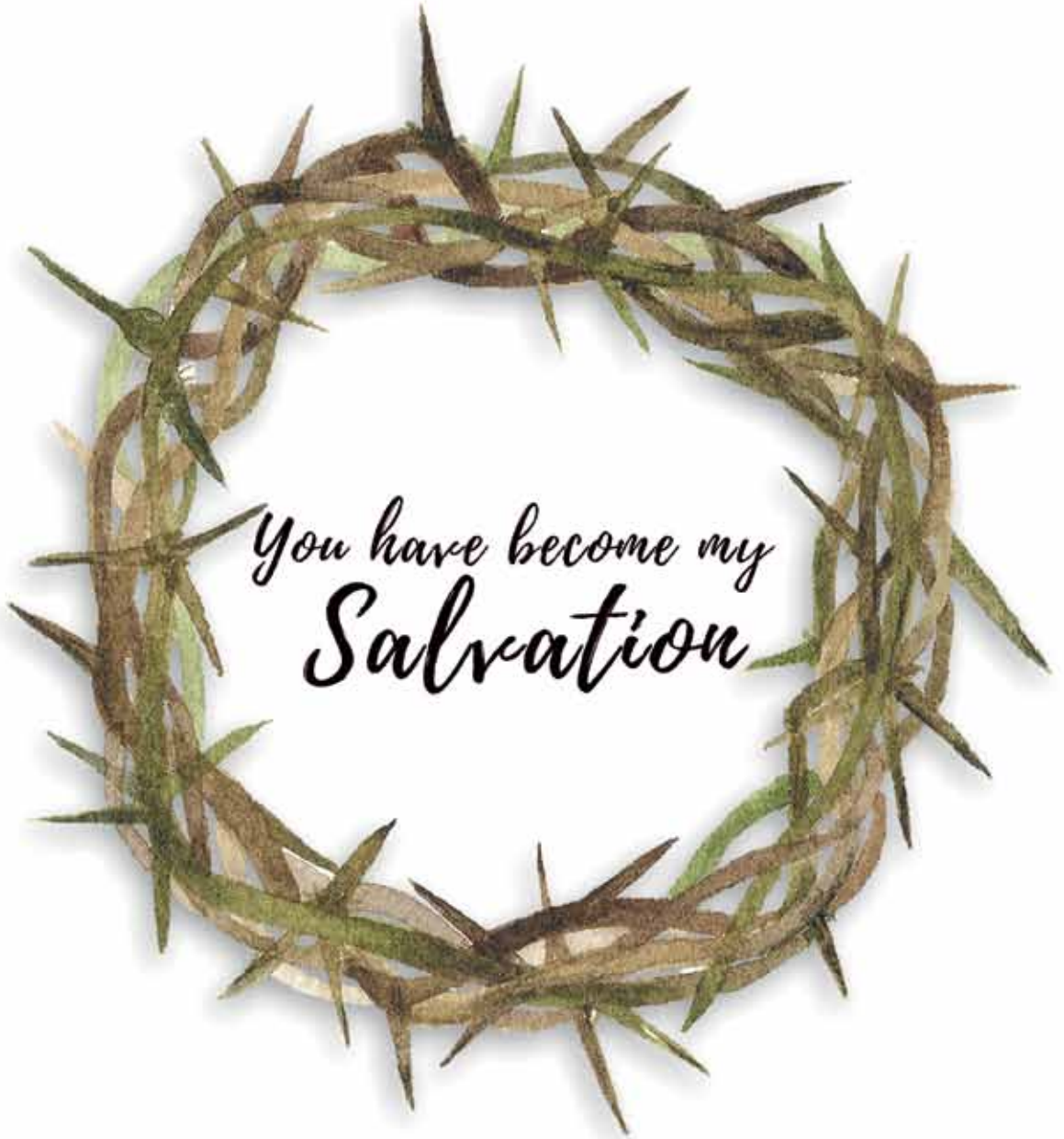
- *I will be their God*
- *They will be my people*
- *My dwelling place will be with them*



*Lord, teach me to be totally
dependent on You as my God
in every area of my life so that Jesus
can be seen in me. Amen.*

Palm Sunday, 14 April • Bible Reading: Psalm 118:20-21

THIS IS THE GATE OF THE LORD



THROUGH WHICH THE
RIGHTEOUS MAY ENTER



Monday, 15 April

Behold, My Servant

Bible Reading: Isaiah 42:1-9

“Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight...”

Welcome to the Servant Songs. This is the first of Isaiah’s four prophetic poems that speak of the character, call and sufferings of Christ. It was through these Servant songs that the early followers of Jesus recognised that He was the Messiah (Matt 12:18-21). In fact, Jesus himself probably looked to these passages of Scripture to understand his calling.

But God’s call did not end with Jesus’ life, death and resurrection. Jesus said, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me (Luke 9:23).” Philippians 2:1-18 makes it even clearer. “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus” – because in imitating Christ’s humility, we bring God glory. When we wholeheartedly allow God to work in us, we hold out the word of life and shine like stars in our dark world.

When we fix our eyes on Jesus, He illuminates our hearts. We get to know the One who went before us and better understand His mission. The more we look to Jesus, the more we will love Him; the more we will draw on His divine strength; the more we grow to become like Him.



“Behold, My Servant.”

*What is He saying to you
through today’s bible reading?*



*Thank you, Lord, for revealing
Yourself to me. May I be
faithful and not be discouraged. May
my life be rooted and built up in You
for Your matchless glory. Amen.*



Tuesday, 16 April

The Paradox of Life

Bible Reading: Isaiah 49:1-7

*"I have laboured in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing at all.
Yet what is due me is in the LORD's hand and my reward is with my God."*

Life is full of paradoxes. To name a few: *The more you fail, the more likely you are to succeed. The more you learn, the more you realise how little you know. The more connected we get, the more isolated we feel.*

In this Servant song, we see a paradox at work. In general, the passage talks about Israel, and specifically, about God's chosen Messiah. We see how the Servant of the Lord is called, equipped and sent to carry out His mission. And yet, the servant experiences a sense of futility and limitation in what He can do.

Like the New Testament believers, you might have prayed much and worked hard, only to experience frustration and disappointments. Take courage from this Servant song. Not only will the Servant restore His people, Israel, but He will also become a source of salvation for all mankind and the very One who was 'despised and abhorred by nations' will finally be exalted. Even when you feel like you're hitting a wall, realise that your labour in the Lord is never in vain (1 Cor 15:58). Allow God to have the final say in your life.



Are you experiencing a kind of 'paradox' in your life right now? Remember that His power is made perfect in your weakness (2 Cor 12:9).



Father, sometimes I struggle as I face my crises of belief. Like the heroes of faith, please help me to believe even when I cannot see. Amen.



Wednesday, 17 April

Deliverance and Remembrance

Bible Reading: Psalm 70

"You are my help and deliverer; LORD, do not delay."

There is an urgency in David's supplication to Yahweh, the Covenant God of Israel. By faith and trust, David knew that he could call on Yahweh to fight his battles and avenge his enemies. Time was not on David's side, his enemies were closing in on him. It was an honest cry for help. God loves an authentic outpouring of ourselves to Him, the baring of our broken hearts, our challenges and fears. The Omniscient, Omnipotent God is always there for us, ever ready to swiftly rescue and deliver us. Like David, we can go to Yahweh for deliverance.

Yahweh loved the heart of David and saw beyond his human frailty. Despite his surging troubles and in the midst of a personal storm, David could still extol the greatness of His Lord, acknowledging the joy and salvation freely offered to every believing heart. God is worthy to be praised! Let God be magnified!

Yet, David grappled with his own spiritual poverty and physical limitations. He knew deep inside him that only Yahweh could deliver him from the impending trouble surrounding him. David knew, David Remembered. Yahweh was his Deliverer.



Do you have full confidence in Yahweh as your Saviour who remembers and rescues you in times of trouble?



God, I trust You to preserve me when things get tough. You are invincible in battle. To you be all glory and praise, forever. Amen.



Thursday, 18 April

Blood of The Passover Lamb

Bible Reading: Exodus 12:1-14

"For Christ, our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed." (1 Corinthians 5:7)

Moses and Aaron had warned the Pharaoh about the plagues that would fall on the Egyptians if the Pharaoh disobeyed God's command to let His people go. Yet, despite seeing his people suffer through six progressively worse plagues, the Pharaoh remained obstinate.

So God announced the final plague, the slaughter of every firstborn in Egypt. Yet, He would provide a way for His own people to escape this plague: a spotless yearling lamb was to be slaughtered and its blood was to be spread on the outside doorframe. The angel of the Lord, when destroying the first-born of the Egyptians, would see which houses were marked by the blood of the lamb, and pass over them.

The Israelites knew that their salvation was not dependent on clever or courageous deeds, but because they had believed God and obeyed His commands. They were saved by the sacrifice and blood of the Spotless Lamb.

John the Baptist introduced Jesus to the crowds as "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). And, after Jesus was crucified, Paul urged the Corinthians to leave their sinful habits. "For Christ, our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed" (1 Cor 5:7).



How do you think the Israelites felt when slaughtering the spotless lamb, they realised that its blood had saved them? How do you feel about Christ's death as the Passover Lamb?



Lord, help me to be grateful for Your death. Help me to fully depend on You for my eternal salvation and everything I try to be and do in this life. Amen.



Friday, 19 April

The Suffering Servant

Bible Reading: Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12

“Yet it was the LORD’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer.”

Christ gladly submitted to the Lord’s will, knowing that his sufferings were predetermined by God to accomplish His purposes, a fulfilment of His promises and of the prophecies to save His people from their sins.

He was despised and rejected that I might stand,
Accepted and complete at His right hand.
Wounded for my transgressions, crushed for my iniquities,
He endured it all to pay the penalty.
A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,
He was whipped that I might be healed.
Bruised in body when beaten and scourged,
Crushed and broken in spirit when my sins He purged.

On the cross he suffered pain and death, and in bearing our sins he suffered the wrath of God. *“My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?”* Do you hear the utter desolation in that cry of the Lamb of God when God the Father turned His face away from him?

“Christ lived and suffered and died for us. Let us also know that he suffered and died because of us.” – Alexander Maclaren



*Can you say this to the
Lord with all your heart?*

*“Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life,
my all.”¹*



*Lord, you suffered much for
me. Help me to understand
in a greater measure the full extent
of your love, that I might have the
fullness of God. Amen.*

¹ Isaac Watts, *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*



Saturday, 20 April

Finding Love in Pain

Bible Reading: Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-24

“Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

How many of us have walked down the wrong path only to find a dead end? We lament out – “How could I *not* have listened to my Father and followed His advice?” We cry out in our desperation; our foolishness; our sorrow.

In Lamentations, the connection between sin and suffering is made explicit: “The Lord has brought her grief because of her many sins” (Lam 1:5). Sin is a breach in the relationship. With it, is God’s perceived absence, inaccessibility, and even abandonment.

We often overemphasise the love of God and downplay His justice and wrath. But the Bible does not ignore these characters of God. God hates sin. His wrath is directly aimed at it.

The consequence of sin is suffering even that of the innocent. We see this in the suffering of Christ; the intensity of it in Gethsemane. Yet, He recognised the necessity of His suffering. He feels most poignantly the pain of those who, through their own determined disobedience, are punished.

Lamentations underscores the importance of not only mourning over our sins but of asking God for His forgiveness when we fail Him. It is in that realm of thought that we ultimately and inevitably reach the Cross.



*In The Problem of Pain,
C.S. Lewis writes:
God whispers to us in our
pleasures, speaks in our
conscience, but shouts in our
pain: it is His megaphone to
rouse a deaf world.*



*Thank you Jesus for
understanding our pain and
for your sacrificial giving up of
heaven’s glory for this world of sin
and misery. Amen.*

Easter Sunday, 21 April • Bible Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:19-26



It is Finished.

Publication Team

Our thanks to the team of writers for their prayerful contributions, to Melissa Joy Choong for her artistic representations in the book cover and Sunday passages, and to Gina Yap Lai Yoong for adding a designer's touch to the publication.

WRITERS

Celina May Benjamin worships at Christ Methodist Church, Ampang. She values moments of quiet listening over a well-brewed kopi, finds cooking therapeutic and reading Christian classics a balm for a weary soul. On the road to retirement and wondering what next on this pilgrim journey.

Rev David Loo started his Life of Ministry as a director with Youth For Christ in 1970. He obtained his diploma and theological degrees from the Singapore Bible College and Trinity Theological College, Singapore. In a service that spans more than 40 years, David has served in various ministries. His keenness is in evangelism and music. Since his retirement from pastoral responsibilities in 2008, David spends his time writing songs and poems, visiting and preaching in the smaller churches, and conducting seminars on the needs of the aged, with a vision towards setting up retirement communities in various parts of the peninsula.

Juwita Suwito is a singer-songwriter with a heart for worship. She weaves her words into music but also has a shy penchant for the written word. Juwita currently chairs the TRAC Board of Worship & Music (2017-2020) and worships with Damansara Utama Methodist Church. In 2019, she and her friends will hit the roads to light up Malaysia with heart songs of the land. Follow #MYWorshipCollective for updates!

Mei K Kuan worships at Whispering Hope Methodist Church. She is a pilgrim in progress who hopes that by God's grace she will complete her journey as a true disciple in time to come. When she is not working or busy attending to the needs of her three four-legged fur kids, she travels across the globe marvelling at God's wondrous creation.

Rhema Karasu worships and serves at Wesley Methodist Church Teluk Intan. She strongly believes that all of life should be of worship to God. Passionate about Worship & Music, she has served and is serving in various capacities in the worship ministries of the church and TRAC. She enjoys singing and making melody to the Lord. A homeschool mom, she gets by daily with a little bit of coffee and a whole lot of Jesus. While waiting for the 'Endgame' through the 'Return of the King', she is currently in training to finish the race (albeit, not an athlete herself).

Tay Hui Cheng is a retired teacher who has a heart for young people, and had been involved with youth work since finishing Form Five, the longest youth ministry being 15 years as Youth Counsellor in Sitiawan Wesley. After graduating from Malaysian Bible Seminary with M. Ministry together with her husband, she relocated to Taiping when her husband, Tan Yee Ho was appointed as pastor of Wesley Methodist Church Taiping. (He has since retired.) In recent years, she has found joy and passion as well in preaching, teaching the Bible and leading Bible study.

ILLUSTRATOR

Melissa Joy is an ardent lover of God and the life He has graced her with. She is passionate about the creative and scientific arts, and believes that life is meant to be experienced to its fullest. To that end, she has tried her hand at many different pursuits in a variety of life arenas including music, painting, calligraphy, photography and teaching. Her aim is to use all the gifts and talents that the Father has given her to glorify Him in return, and to bless others wherever possible. The current adventure she is on involves new lands and a new topic of study together with her husband, Jeremy Lim.

LAYOUT & DESIGN

Gina Yap Lai Yoong is a marketing communications specialist with the skills to execute the campaigns she strategizes for. Her capabilities to write and design ensure that a page is curated to present the complete message to its readers with an attractive, easy readability impact. She is passionate about books and publications, poring over pages to understand its wonders. Find out more about her at www.ginayaplaiyoong.com or simply get connected on social media (/ginayaplaiyoong).



Trinity Annual Conference (TRAC)

2 Jalan 5/39, 46000 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia

+603 7954 2836 | admin@trac.org.my | www.trac.org.my