



Lent Meditations

2023

TRAC Board of Worship & Music

Welcome to Lent Meditations 2023!

As we journey together in reflecting on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, here are some features that you might find helpful:



Read the Word

Take time, first of all, to read and reflect on the Word of God. If you are reading this in the PDF format, just touch on the Bible Reading reference and the hyperlink will take you to the passage of the day. Let us hear what God might be saying to us individually through His Word so that the devotional reflections can further enrich our time with Him.



Listen to the Reflections

For those of us who are aural learners, an audio version of these daily meditations is also available, presenting each day's reading in the voice of yet another member of the TRAC family. Listen daily at <https://anchor.fm/TRACWorship>, or you could follow or subscribe to the podcast on your favourite streaming platform to receive your daily feed.



Worship in Wonder

Sundays within Lent are “mini-Easters” where we joyfully look forward to our Lord’s resurrection amidst the self-examination and reflectiveness of Lent. Our Sundays traditionally feature creative expressions of fellow believers and this year, we worship along with the psalmists through the lens of photography!

May these 40 days of Lent and “mini-Easters” challenge our minds, inspire our hearts, and transform our behaviour.

Come, Follow, Become like Jesus.

From your fellow Lent sojourners,

TRAC Board
of Worship & Music

□ Bible Reading: [2 Corinthians 6:1-10](#)

WE ARE GOD'S CO-WORKERS

As God's co-workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain ... We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. (2 Corinthians 6:1, 3)

Day
1

Ash Wednesday
22 Feb 2023

We are co-workers with God, the Father. This is a recurring theme in Paul's letters discussed in both 1 Corinthians 3 and 1 Thessalonians 3. God is at work and we are invited to join Him. Let us begin Lent 2023 with this thought, "We are God's co-workers."

As God's co-worker, Paul submits himself to purity, knowledge, longsuffering, kindness, sincere love, and the word of truth. He presses on with Kingdom work by the power of God, the Holy Spirit; enduring many hardships including stonings, beatings, and imprisonments. Yet having suffered all these, Paul asserts in verse 10 that though "*sorrowful, yet [he is] always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything*".

Likewise, as God's co-workers, we surrender fully to Him who invites us to join in His work. Paul says our ministry needs to be blameless, and amongst other things, we should submit ourselves to purity. Peter, his fellow-labourer, describes purity as "... *obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, [loving] one another deeply, from the heart ... [having] been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God*". (1 Peter 1:22-23)



As His co-worker, continually enter into conversations with God and ask Him to teach you to serve Him well, that you may not receive His grace in vain.

Gracious God, thank You for drawing me into Your redemptive work as a co-worker. Guard my steps that I may walk faithfully and not receive Your grace in vain. Amen.

Day

2

Thursday
23 Feb 2023

□ Bible Reading: [Romans 1:1-7](#)

CHRIST-CENTRED CHRISTIANS

... the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David ... (Romans 1:2-3)

Today's Scripture passage is taken from Paul's letter to the believers in Rome. In his introduction, Paul's centredness in Christ is plainly evident to his readers:

- Paul, Christ's bondservant
- Paul, set apart for Christ's gospel
- Paul, apostle called through Christ
- Paul, called by Christ to be His saint with fellow Christians

In response to today's passage, we need to ask ourselves, "Am I more focused on self or on Christ?" It would be tragic if Christians and the Church (Body of Christ) were more focused on self, rather than Christ; for Jesus is "*the Way, the Truth, and the Life*". Jesus is the means, and the fulfilment of life itself.

Paul, the Christ-centred Christian, sets an excellent example for us. His life shines for Jesus Christ because it was centred in our Lord. He was Christ's bondservant, bonded by His love and grace. He was set apart for Christ's gospel, appointed through Christ for God's work, and joined to fellow saints who were called to oneness in Christ.

Thus, Paul's life and teachings may be summed up in his simple declaration, "*It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.*" (Galatians 2:20b NKJV)



What would you start doing to be more focused on Christ, instead of self? Parents and grandparents, how would you guide and instil this in the next generation?

It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. This is my prayer for me and my family – that others will identify us as Christ-centred believers. Amen.

□ Bible Reading: [Romans 1:8-17](#)

THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.
(Romans 1:16 NKJV)*

Day

3

Friday
24 Feb 2023

John Wesley understood the power of the gospel, and trusted in its power. Wesley preached well-expounded sermons that were not dressed with illustrations and anecdotes, and his sermons were never boring. People responded to Wesley's sermons because the Word of God is powerful, alive, and relevant. That is the power of the gospel.

Paul said, "*I am not ashamed of the gospel.*" For him, the gospel alone was sufficient. He neither crafted nor altered the message to make it more palatable. He confronted Peter for compromising the gospel of grace to please Jewish Christians. The gospel of Christ is primary and central.

How do you handle the gospel of Christ? We need to learn from the apostle Paul and John Wesley. Let us not major in books and authors that teach us how to get the best out of the gospel, but minor in the gospel itself. We must not lose the magnificence of the gospel, and we ought to stop trying to make the gospel palatable. It is always relevant. Let us learn to handle the gospel of Christ with reverence, love, and awe, "*for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes*".



Did the Bible come alive and speak to you today? What are some things you can do to help you look forward to spending time with God's Word?

Lord, open my eyes to the truth of Your Word. Grant me wisdom as I read, and clarity and discernment as I apply Your Word in my daily life. Amen.

Day

4

Saturday
25 Feb 2023

□ Bible Reading: [Psalm 51](#)

HAVE MERCY ON ME, O GOD

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.
(Psalm 51:1)*

Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy. The Christian practice of the examen helps us identify our sins before God so that we can turn away from that which is destructive. The spiritual discipline of confession and repentance is God's gift of grace, allowing us to acknowledge and take responsibility for our sins, and identify the root of sinful behaviours. John Wesley instructed members to attend to self-examination. Here are some examples:

- Did the Bible live in me today?
- Do I give it time to speak to me every day?
- Am I enjoying prayer?
- When did I last speak to someone about my faith?
- Am I defeated in any part of my life?
- Am I jealous, impure, critical, irritable, touchy, or distrustful?
- Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I really am? In other words, am I a hypocrite?

The Holy Spirit works in us through such times of reverent self-examination. For in confession and repentance we uphold that God's ways are higher than ours, and become more pliable in the hands of the Potter.



Confession and repentance lead to behavioural changes, and growth in Christlikeness. Therefore, attend to confession and repentance with godly reverence. Make self-examination a part of your spiritual disciplines.

*Merciful Father, before You, I repent. Create a pure heart in me,
renew a steadfast spirit within me, and restore to me the joy of
Your salvation, I pray. Amen.*

□ Bible Reading: Psalm 32

MY HIDING PLACE

You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance. (Psalm 32:7)

1st

Sunday in Lent
26 Feb 2023



Day

5

Monday
27 Feb 2023

□ Bible Reading: [1 Kings 19:1-8](#)

SLOW DOWN AND FEED

*"Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you."
(1 Kings 19:7b)*

The world is moving faster than ever before. The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly sped up technological advances. Different media outlets and communication platforms mean that we are always connected, always reachable, and always engaged. The fast-paced busyness of life can leave us tired, drained, and fearful about the challenges tomorrow may bring.

Often, it is our spiritual health that is the first to be neglected and forgotten while other noises in the world around us scream for our attention. What will we find when we take an honest look within ourselves? Will we find a spiritual giant who is strong and steadfast, ready to face the challenges ahead; or will we find a shrivelled, bruised, and battered spiritual-being that is weak from being abandoned? Elijah was afraid, weak, and tired when God found him, and God nourished him with bread and water.

As we journey into Lent, let us intentionally slow down our busy lives, and even leave the company of others if we need to. Let us cry out to God for a fresh renewal – to be nourished by His bread (the Word of God) and His water (the Spirit of God).



What can you do to clear the clutter that causes you to neglect your spiritual health? Take this opportunity to start scheduling regular "mealtimes" to be nourished by God.

Dear God, forgive us for the times we have neglected our spiritual-wellbeing. Grant us the wisdom to slow down and return to You daily for our nourishment. Amen.

□ Bible Reading: [Hebrews 4:14–5:10](#)

APPROACH WITH CONFIDENCE

... so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:16b)

Day

6

Tuesday
28 Feb 2023

Have you ever felt like you are not good enough to come into God's presence? It is a familiar feeling and one that most Christians feel at some point in their walk with God. Some days it seems like we must do everything right before we can even think of approaching the throne of grace.

However, Jesus has set an example for us as He offered prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears. Because of His perfect submission, He became salvation for us all. So let us come to God with confidence, imperfect as we are, not by our own merits but through Christ's so that we may receive mercy for our imperfections and find sufficient grace to carry us through! The Bible tells us that we can go to God in prayer with confidence.

We have a great High Priest who understands us and is able to sympathise with our weaknesses. He knows how difficult life can be because He was tempted in every way as we are, yet He did not sin. As you come before God and pray, remember that Jesus is interceding for you right now at the Father's right hand.



The way to God is now open through Jesus Christ our Mediator. Will you put aside your pride and your shame and come to receive mercy and grace from Him?

Dear God, help us not to look at ourselves but rather to cling on to Jesus as our Mediator and High Priest. Amen.

Day

7

Wednesday
1 Mar 2023

□ Bible Reading: Exodus 34:1-9, 27-28

CHISEL OUT

"Chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke." (Exodus 34:1)

Relationships are a two-way street. God wants to write His love and His laws on our hearts, but we must be willing to chisel out time for Him in order for that to happen. Let us be honest; it is hard. We are often busy, our schedules are packed, and sometimes we just do not have time to spend with God in the way we want to – the way He wants us to.

Often, we expect God to meet us on our terms and fit into our schedules. Sometimes in His grace and mercy, He does. Very often, however, we break this covenant relationship with Him and are drawn away from our first love by other loves. We chisel out time in our schedules for things other than God.

We need to give God that which is rightfully His – our whole selves – so that He can write His love and His laws on our hearts of flesh again (no longer on stone tablets). The word "chisel" implies that intention and time are required. Our heavenly Father is ever ready to imprint Himself into our lives. Are we, His beloved children, ready to receive Him and give Him the time?



What can you do today to intentionally chisel out a platform for God to impart His Spirit into your life again?

Dear God, forgive us for breaking our covenant relationship of love with You. Grant in us a greater desire for You to imprint more of Yourself into our lives. Amen.

□ Bible Reading: [2 Timothy 1:3-7](#)

FAN INTO FLAME

For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. (2 Timothy 1:7)

Day

8

Thursday
2 Mar 2023

When we feel like God is moving in us, we often get motivated to do something for God. We want to grow our spiritual life, make a difference in the world, or take on a new challenge. Yet, that motivation does not last. Like making a new year's resolution, we often start strong but give up just as fast. After a while, we shy away from trying altogether.

Fanning into flame the gifts that God has bestowed on us does not need a strong gust of wind, but rather, a steady and consistent flow of oxygen to breathe life into the fire. The key words are "steady" and "consistent". God has not given us a timid spirit, but the Spirit's power, His love, and the ability to see things through by His grace.

The Holy Spirit is ready and waiting for you to invite Him in with open arms so He can work wonders in and through you! Let us make this week count by being faithful in small things, and watch how our Father will amaze us with His grace and power!



What is something God has asked you to do that you have given up doing? Pray for grace and for fresh winds to blow once again.

*Lord, thank You for granting us power, love, and self-discipline.
May we be steady and consistent in the small things,
as You accomplish Your plans in and through us. Amen.*

Day

9

Friday
3 Mar 2023

□ Bible Reading: Micah 7:18-20

OUR INCOMPARABLE GOD

Who is a God like you ... [You] delight to show mercy ... and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea. (Micah 7:18-19)

When Micah wrote his book, the sins of Judah and Israel were great, and he warned them of terrible judgement to come because they had followed in the footsteps of the godless nations around them, and forsaken the God of their ancestors.

Yet in the midst of the frightening prediction of destruction and exile, Micah promised hope and consolation as he described God's love and forgiveness for those who turn back to Him. When Micah wrote this marvellous confession of faith, the future looked beyond redemption, but he clung on to hope because he knew God's unchanging character. He trusted that no matter how dark the times, the light of God's promises would continue to shine.

No one forgives like our God, who not only forgives, but "[hurls] all our iniquities into the depths of the sea" and pardons our past, present, and future sins. It is not because of our goodness that God forgives us. It is His amazing grace and matchless love that result in His incredible mercy and compassion.

When we truly understand this, we will have a holy fear of our awesome God, and be moved to declare "Who is a God like You?"



We need to remind ourselves that we are just like Israel and have committed spiritual adultery time and time again. Are you ready to repent and seek God's forgiveness?

Thank You, Father, for Your unchanging love to me, even during the times when I have strayed from You. Thank You that You delight in mercy and forgiveness. Amen.

□ Bible Reading: [Isaiah 51:4-8](#)

THE RIGHTEOUS GOD WHO OFFERS DELIVERANCE

"Hear me, you who know what is right, you people who have taken my instruction to heart ... my righteousness will last forever ..." (Isaiah 51:7-8)

Day
10
Saturday
4 Mar 2023

God was going to punish His people for their faithless immorality and idolatry. Isaiah earlier foretold the downfall of both Israel and Judah at the hands of Assyria and Babylon respectively. These two nations would cruelly oppress God's people.

Since the Fall, the strong and powerful have always oppressed the poor and under-privileged. Think of atrocities like human trafficking, ill-treatment of foreign workers, exploitation of employees by greedy bosses, and other forms of modern slavery. When will such injustices cease?

However, knowing that God's righteousness "*will last forever*", as opposed to the transient nature of the wicked who will one day be devoured by the moth and the worm, should encourage those living in tribulation to hope in God and not fear what mere mortals can do to them. God is in total control.

There are only three places for humankind to dwell: heaven, hell, and this temporal world. One day this world will end, and the Lord will usher in a new heaven and earth where righteousness reigns for those who keep on loving and obeying Him.

In the meantime, we who know what is right should stand strong in faith, and wait patiently for God's deliverance.



Do you know of anyone living under oppression? What hope can you give to the person? If you are that person, how can you strengthen your confidence in God's deliverance?

Lord, help me not to be overwhelmed by the injustice around me, but look to You and seek to walk in righteousness as I wait patiently for Your deliverance. Amen.

2nd

Sunday in Lent
5 Mar 2023

□ Bible Reading: Psalm 121

EYES LIFTED TO GOD

*I lift up my eyes to the mountains— where does my help come from?
My help comes from the LORD ... (Psalm 121:1-2a)*



□ Bible Reading: [Numbers 21:4-9](#)

STUMBLING BLOCKS OR STEPPING STONES?

"Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!" (Numbers 21:5)

Day
11
Monday
6 Mar 2023

We often perceive trials as stumbling blocks to be avoided. When encountering one, we tend to behave like the Israelites did in Numbers 21:5 – complain about our situation, wonder why God has allowed it, and forget all the blessings He has given us in the past. The result is an attitude of ingratitude towards God.

But for God, trials are stepping stones to be embraced. Trials are a blessing to us because they build into our lives endurance and character development resulting in a mature and godly character, something God's people should desire. The specific purpose God allowed the Israelites' trials was to produce in them a stronger faith as they prepared to enter Canaan. But they chose rebellion rather than submission, and railed against Moses and God.

In the Israelites' suffering, the serpent Moses crafted proved effective and those who obeyed God's command did not perish but had life. In our trials, God has provided us with something far greater, and of unsurpassed value: the cross of Christ. And as we entrust ourselves to the power of the cross, God will immerse us in His grace and strength, comfort, peace, and deliverance – the blessings of eternal life.



How do you perceive trials? Are they stumbling blocks or stepping stones to you? Are you willing and ready to perceive them as God does?

Lord, I often come to You full of complaints and dissatisfaction when facing difficulties. Help me to trust that You will use these times of testing for my good. Amen.

Day
12
Tuesday
7 Mar 2023

□ Bible Reading: [Romans 4:6-13](#)

HOW GOD CREDITS RIGHTEOUSNESS

We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. (Romans 4:9)

Many Christians, whether consciously or subconsciously, have the notion that being credited with righteousness by God depends on their performance, namely, being faithful in church attendance, tithing and giving, service, good works, and the like.

Everyone wants to be credited with righteousness because that determines our eternal destiny, and how we are to live in this world. But when we base our righteousness on our performance, that can soon degenerate into self-righteousness, which is deeply rooted in our pride and self-sufficiency. We take pride in all the acceptable religious rituals we do, and become critical of those who do not measure up to our standards.

Abraham's life was not perfect; he made many mistakes. But he was a man of obedience that came from his faith in God. And "*his faith was credited to him as righteousness.*"

There are two ways to gain credit: as wages, or as a gift. When you work, your wages are credited to you as your due. However, when you receive credit even if you do not do any work, it is a gift of God's grace. Which do you prefer? The wages given because you worked for it, or credit given as a gift?



Do you see the basis of your righteousness as performance or a gift of grace? Do you view people's righteousness based on how well they perform their religious rituals?

Thank you, Lord, that my righteousness does not depend on my performance, but it is simply a matter of faith in Christ's finished work on the cross. Amen.

□ Bible Reading: [Ezekiel 36:22-32](#)

MADE CLEAN

'I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols.'
(Ezekiel 36:25)

Day
13
Wednesday
8 Mar 2023

How can a glass of dirty water become clean? Empty the dirty water from the glass and replace it with clean water. Seems simple, right? Not so if the glass represents us. Just like the glass that can do nothing on its own to make the water inside clean, we can do nothing to clean ourselves of sin.

It is by God's grace that He cleanses us of sin, gives us a new heart, puts the Holy Spirit in us, nurtures a relationship with us, restores us into a community, and provides for our physical needs. He even increases the yield of our labour!

Why would He do all this for us? So that through us, despite the fact that we are broken people, others will look at us and know that Jesus Christ is indeed God and Lord of all.

How should we respond to His grace? We should acknowledge and confess our sins, repent, and turn back to Him.

God and sin cannot co-exist, like light and darkness cannot exist at the same time. Light will always dispel darkness. That is why we must leave sin behind and pursue God's light.



*Have you been away from God, or related to Him at arm's length?
He loves you and wants to have a deeper relationship with you.
Will you allow Him?*

*Lord Jesus, thank You for making me clean through Your sacrifice
on the cross. Holy Spirit, please guide me and enable me to draw
closer to the Father. Amen.*

Day
14

Thursday
9 Mar 2023

□ Bible Reading: [Exodus 16:1-8](#)

WHERE DOES YOUR BREAD COME FROM?

Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day." (Exodus 16:4a)

People fear the unknown. This includes the unknown ways in which God provides for His children.

The Israelites were familiar with their life of slavery in Egypt. They had not experienced the joy of living in the freedom that comes from God, and were holding on to what was difficult but familiar. This prevented them from receiving the blessings that the Lord was about to pour onto them. Their complaints about the lack of food and being in the wilderness were rooted in fear. They just did not know where their next meal would come from, and thus could not trust in the providence of God, especially when it was coming from an unfamiliar source that they had neither seen nor known.

God knows our needs even before we ask. While taking things into our own hands often seems like common sense, the best and most trustworthy plan is to defer to the One who cares for us more than our closest and dearest. What is left for us to do is to make the decision to trust Him, again and again.



Will you make a decision to trust God even if He provides in ways that are beyond your expectations and imagination?

Lord, I choose to trust You even when I don't know how, where, or when Your providence will come. I trust Your timing is always perfect and You never fail. Amen.

□ Bible Reading: Exodus 16:9-21

NOT MY WAY BUT GOD'S BE DONE

So the people of Israel did as they were told. Some gathered a lot, some only a little. (Exodus 16:17 NLT)

Day
15
Friday
10 Mar 2023

When relating with God, “doing as we are told” is challenging, especially in the area of divine providence. It is because we tend to want control over our lives. Some may call this “security”.

The Israelites “*did as they were told*” only in the act of gathering. They ignored the instruction regarding the amount: “*an omer for each person*” (about 1.4kg). Some attempted to take control and collected more than they needed, but the extra they collected did not result in a surplus. Their additional efforts made no returns. They had just enough. Others gathered less than an omer per person. Regardless, God made sure every family had what they needed.

Like the Israelites who went out to gather food, we, too, go out to work daily to provide for ourselves and our families. But in the process of earning, many seek to work more to gain a surplus at the expense of having less time with loved ones. The point here is not about being hardworking or lazy. It is about learning to trust in God’s providence by “doing as we are told” so that we can focus on our relationship – first with God, then with people.



What stops you from trusting in God’s providence? Tell Him in prayer.

*Lord, help me to trust You and not waver in my faith. Help me to put You first, so I can focus on You and the people around me.
Amen.*

Day
16

Saturday
11 Mar 2023

□ Bible Reading: [Exodus 16:27-35](#)

TRUST COMES WITH UNDERSTANDING

So the people rested on the seventh day. (Exodus 16:30)

The Israelites finally trusted God to provide and did as they were told. Two things helped them learn to trust Him:

1. God's trustworthiness - though they did not trust God initially, He still provided for them and everything He said came true.
2. God's goodness - when they realized the Sabbath was a gift rather than a restriction, they had no problem trusting God!

So, if trusting in God's providence is new to you, know that He loves you and will provide for you. It is not a matter of being "worthy enough" to receive from Him. God wants to provide for you as a good Father provides for His child. After all, everything in creation belongs to Him – He made everything! So, continue to work earnestly and honestly. If your efforts fall short of what you need, ask our heavenly Father for help and trust that He will provide. This is a step of faith.

If trusting in His providence is not new for you, always remember that God is trustworthy and good, and His instructions are never meant to bring us harm, but to draw us closer to Him. Seek the Giver, not the gift.



Ask the Lord to show you an aspect of your life that you should begin to trust Him to provide for.

Father, help me see that You are always consistent in all You do and say. Help me acknowledge Your ways, and choose to trust You for everything I need. Amen.

□ Bible Reading: Psalm 95

OUR CREATOR GOD

*The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.
(Psalm 95:5)*

3rd

Sunday in Lent
12 Mar 2023



Day
17
Monday
13 Mar 2023

□ Bible Reading: [Genesis 24:1-27](#)

DISCERNING THE WORKINGS OF GOD

The man gazed at her in silence to learn whether the LORD had prospered his journey or not. (Genesis 24:21 ESV)

There are many types of anxieties that one may go through in life. But the anxiety that comes from trying to discern the work of God amid complex situations can often be subtle and takes place in the subconscious. Such an anxiety may stem from one's personal weaknesses and insecurities.

In today's reading, one wonders whether Abraham's servant was in a similar situation. Abraham had sent him back to his hometown with a promise that God would provide a wife for Isaac. The servant was placed in a situation of uncertainty. His mind would have thought about the challenges: how could he know who was to be the bride for his master's son? Walking in the light of God's divine will had placed him in an unfamiliar and difficult position.

Yet, following God is always an adventure in learning more about trusting God's Word and His work. At the critical juncture of his trip, the servant prayed for guidance, and "*before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah ... came out with her water jar on her shoulder.*" Thus, because he trusted and obeyed despite his fears and anxieties, the servant experienced for himself God's marvellous hand at work.



What about your own subtle subconscious anxieties in following Jesus? Why not talk to God about them? Keep your eyes open to see how God might answer your prayer.

*Father, You are aware of my fears and struggles. Help me to trust You, and to wait in silence to see what You are doing in the world.
Amen.*

□ Bible Reading: Genesis 29:1-14

COURAGE TO ACT

Now as soon as Jacob saw Rachel ... Jacob came near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. (Genesis 29:10 ESV)

Day
18
Tuesday
14 Mar 2023

The story in this passage might almost seem fictional and comical. The moment Jacob saw Rachel, the one whom he was destined to marry (see Genesis 28:2), he sprang into action. He ignored the custom of the people; with his bare hands he rolled away the stone from the well's mouth to water the flock that she was shepherding. Unlike Abraham's servant who waited in silence to discern the workings of God, Jacob acted impulsively. That brings some questions to mind, "Can such sporadic and impromptu actions be in line with God's will and purposes? Is the Lord able to use such actions to fulfil His purposes in Jacob's life?"

In hindsight, we discover that God is not limited to work in a certain way in order to accomplish His purposes. Jacob might be a "go-getter" but God's dealing with him through Laban and family ultimately brought about a change in his character (Genesis 32:28) and in alignment to his divinely-appointed destiny (Genesis 28:14). What seemed to be an immature and spontaneous act was used by God to carry out His greater purposes in Jacob's life. How great and amazing is God!



God can use various circumstances and temperaments to fulfil His purpose. Give thanks to Him for His sovereign work in your life.

I am thankful, Lord, that You are present and at work in and through every situation. Give me the courage to step out and obey Your prompting and guidance. Amen.

Day
19
Wednesday
15 Mar 2023

□ Bible Reading: [John 7:14-31, 37-39](#)

HIS WILL, OUR WILL

"If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority." (John 7:17 ESV)

An important element in knowing and discerning God's guidance is the will of the discernor. Ultimately, it all boils down to the yielding and submission of one's will to God. Like Jesus, when the will is yielded to God and the only purpose is to do His will, everything else about God becomes visible. God's ways and teachings are no longer hidden. It becomes as clear as broad daylight.

In this passage, we find confusion in the minds of people. They were confused about the identity of Jesus. They struggled to discern the source of His teaching. Even when Jesus clearly revealed Himself and offered them the Spirit of God, they were unable to respond to Him. Why? Their problem was not their illiteracy or lack of knowledge, but the refusal to yield their wills to God.

Until we, by the grace of God, surrender and place our wills at His feet, we are merely playing games with Him. We may seem passionate about spiritual things and eager to seek God's will, but unless we submit to Him, our minds are clouded and we are unable to discern His will and purposes in our lives.



Whose will are you committed to doing? Is God's will the most important and fundamental orientation in all that you do and say? Surrender your will to God.

Almighty God, please forgive me for my lack of trust and submission. By Your grace, I commit my will to You. Let Your will be done in my life. Amen.

□ Bible Reading: 1 Samuel 15:10-21

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

"I have obeyed the voice of the LORD ... But the people took ... the best of the things ... to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal." (1 Samuel 15:20-21 ESV)

Day
20
Thursday
16 Mar 2023

Jeremiah said, *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick ..."* (Jeremiah 17:9 ESV). We find this truth reflected in this story. When we read Saul's excuse for his lack of obedience, we may even be tempted to sympathise with his struggle to obey God. He did go out on the mission. He intended to fully obey God in dealing with the Amalekites and devoted things, but the people opposed him. He yielded to what seemed like a nobler plan for dealing with the devoted things – to sacrifice them to the Lord.

A careful reading, however, of verse 12 of this passage reveals what was really in Saul's heart: *"And it was told Samuel, 'Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself.'"* At the heart of Saul's response to God was self-interest. His act of building a monument for himself betrayed and compromised his words to Samuel.

Unless we are prepared to deal with the deceitfulness and self-orientation of our hearts, we cannot obey God fully. The heart of the matter is the matter of the heart! Only a life that is *"crucified with Christ"* (Galatians 2:20) is set free to follow Christ, unreservedly.



Are you crucified with Christ? How have you responded to God's instructions? Repent and rededicate your life if you have been seeking to set up a monument for yourself.

Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my anxieties; see if there is any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. Amen.

Day
21
Friday
17 Mar 2023

□ Bible Reading: 1 Samuel 15:22-31

LISTEN AND OBEY

*But Samuel replied: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the LORD?"
(1 Samuel 15:22a)*

Samuel reminded Saul that obedience to God was better than whatever "sacrifice" he could conjure up in his human wisdom. Saul had heard the commands of the Lord directly from the prophet Samuel, and it was very clear what was commanded, yet he chose to deny the Lord's wisdom in lieu of his own. In fact, his seemingly harmless rebellion was likened to witchcraft and idolatry, which were both grave sins. Later, Saul "repented" of his actions before the Lord, but it was then revealed that Saul was far more concerned about finding honour among the elders of Israel than in setting his relationship right with God. His repentance was not genuine.

May this story be a sober reminder that we should have the meekness to truly repent before the Lord, and the courage to correct our course and obey Him above all else. May we be humble and open to accept how God chooses to teach us and deal with us, instead of hoping that our "repentance" will lead to the legitimization of our past actions. The God whom we worship demands and deserves absolute submission from us. We cannot manipulate Him.



Are there practices in your life that you justify as being "sacrificial to God", but they have underlying ulterior motives? Are you struggling with total obedience to God?

*O merciful Lord, slow to anger and abounding in love:
reveal to me that which I cannot see. If I have done wrong,
may I not do so again. Amen.*

□ Bible Reading: [John 1:1-9](#)

ARISE AND SHINE

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:5)

Day
22
Saturday
18 Mar 2023

Just as Jesus is the Light, we are called to be the light of the world (Matthew 5:14-16). Letting our light shine before others is an active choice that requires us to put forth our words and conduct before the world. But how can we be light if we do not know the difference between light and darkness? Jesus Himself is the source of our wisdom to discern. We ought to spend time with Him to learn His ways, and draw strength from Him to be His witnesses and lights in this world.

In John 16:33, Jesus told His disciples to “*take heart*”, for He has “*overcome the world*”. The darkness cannot overcome the light. At times, it may seem like Christ’s standards are unattainable and we are doomed to repeated failure in our human weakness. However, the fact that the darkness has not overcome the light should bring us great comfort – we are not called to fight a losing battle, but we are called into battle armed with the knowledge that the war has already been won, and Christ is coming again. Thus, we may be confident our witness and struggles against the darkness will not be in vain.



Have you been intentional about being Christ’s light in the world? Are there any parts of your life where you are hiding your lamp under a basket? Why?

Lord Jesus, help me to be a light as You are Light, and lead me through the darkness as I fix my eyes on You. Amen.

4th

Sunday in Lent
19 Mar 2023

□ Bible Reading: Psalm 23

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

... he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. (Psalm 23:2b-3)



□ Bible Reading: Psalm 146

PRINCES AND THE ALMIGHTY

Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save. (Psalm 146:3)

Day
23
Monday
20 Mar 2023

Today's reading reminds us to not put our trust in human beings. This is wise, for even the best leader or strongest institution cannot save us. After the human departs, he no longer has control and his carefully crafted plans may come apart. When we place lofty hopes on human organisations to fix this fractured world, we are setting ourselves up for disappointment because fallen people cannot mend a broken world.

In contrast, the psalmist tells us that those who put their trust in the Lord are blessed. Unlike human leaders, God is the all-powerful Creator of the earth. He is the only One who can truly alleviate human suffering, for only He can pardon sin. He is the just Judge, able to thwart the plans of the wicked.

The psalmist ends by saying that the Lord will reign forever. God is eternal. Nothing and no one can dethrone Him or rob Him of His power. We can trust that His plans, wisdom, and most importantly, His love endures forever. We must view all human authorities in light of a perfect God who is sovereign over them. He alone is worthy of our unending praise.



Which human leaders are important to you? How can you continue to support and hope in them? How does God fit into the picture?

O God all powerful, who knows my deepest desires, help me to surrender my hopes and dreams to You, and mould my heart to long only after Your will. Amen.

Day
24

Tuesday
21 Mar 2023

□ Bible Reading: [Colossians 1:9-14](#)

LIVING A LIFE WORTHY OF THE LORD

... so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God ... (Colossians 1:10)

What a wonderful experience it is to receive forgiveness of sins through faith in the redemptive work of Jesus on the cross. We have assurance of eternal life and have received the Holy Spirit, our Helper and Comforter. But the Christian experience does not end there.

In today's passage Paul prays for the believers in Colossae, asking God to fill them with knowledge of His will for the purpose that they may live a life worthy of the Lord. Our lives are meant to be fruitful, full of good works (even though it is by faith that we are saved), and we are meant to continually grow in our knowledge of God.

Our faith should never be stagnant. We grow when we allow ourselves to be strengthened by God's power through the Holy Spirit who will enable us to endure with patience all the trials that come our way. We have the confidence that this same power that raised Christ from the dead has been imparted to all God's children.



Reflect on your journey as a Christian. How have you grown in your knowledge of Christ? Are you bearing fruit? Are you living a life worthy of the Lord?

Father, by the power of Your Holy Spirit, teach me to please You in everything I say and do, and help me grow in my knowledge and experience of You. Amen.

□ Bible Reading: Matthew 9:27-34

MORE THAN A GOOD TEACHER OR MIRACLE-WORKER

The crowd was amazed and said, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel." (Matthew 9:33)

Day
25
Wednesday
22 Mar 2023

Some people, even non-Christians, consider Jesus to be a good teacher. But the Gospels tell us that Jesus is much more than that – He is the Son of the living God.

Matthew shows us that Jesus is the promised Messiah by using the title “*Son of David*” in his writing. In this Gospel account, Jesus began by asking the blind men if they believed that He was able to heal them. He then demonstrated His divine power by healing the men of their blindness, and driving out a demon from the mute person. The people who witnessed these healings proclaimed that nothing like that had ever been seen in Israel.

But why did Jesus warn them to not spread the word about this? Jesus did not want to be known only as a miracle-worker, or be pushed into the role of a political leader by those who believed that the Messiah would be the one who would lead a Jewish revolution against the Romans. Jesus’ mission was to bring salvation and spiritual healing to all who believed, and not merely the physical healing of illnesses.



Who is Christ to you? Are you only drawn to the good teachings and miracles of Jesus, or have you been spiritually renewed?

*Jesus, open my eyes to see You as my Saviour and Lord.
Grant me the experience of Your divine touch, and teach me to
appreciate the spiritual healing You bring. Amen.*

Day
26
Thursday
23 Mar 2023

□ Bible Reading: Ezekiel 2:8–3:3

EATING GOD'S WORD

*So I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth.
(Ezekiel 3:3b)*

Ezekiel was one of the Jewish exiles in Babylon. He served as a prophet of the Lord from 593 B.C. till 571 B.C. The Lord instructed Ezekiel to listen to His words, to not rebel, and to open his mouth and eat the scroll that was given to him. To eat the Word of God implies not only a daily intake, but also a daily ingesting and chewing.

This indicates that when we read God's Word, we need to spend time meditating on it, praying, and asking the Holy Spirit for divine revelation, and then allowing the living Word to nourish us. The scroll had to be eaten and become part of the prophet before Ezekiel could speak God's words to the people.

Likewise, when we feed on Scripture, we need to allow it to take root in our hearts and transform us by daily application in our lives so that we can be living testimonies for God.



What priority do you give your daily devotion? Do you look forward to spending time growing in your knowledge and experience of God?

*Lord, thank You for Your Word which lights my path.
Help me dwell in it, and be transformed by it, so that I will not
conform to this world. Amen.*

□ Bible Reading: Psalm 130

A SINNER'S WAIT

*I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning. (Psalm 130:6)*

Day
27
Friday
24 Mar 2023

The psalmist was aware of the ugliness of his sins. He was drowning in the consequences of his rebellion against God. In such depths of guilt, he felt no joy, only silent sorrow. He heard no music, only his desperate cry to God for mercy.

Like the psalmist, when we realise our wretchedness, we long for forgiveness. When we realise our sinful and destructive nature, we long for restoration. But unlike the psalmist, we can now turn our eyes to the cross, and trust that when He was crucified, Jesus Christ had taken the punishment for our sins upon Himself. We can cry out to our living God and ask for complete forgiveness. He will not condemn us. Instead, He will restore us to serve and honour Him with joy!

The despicable. The rebel. The wayward. God never gives up waiting for their return. So will He wait for those who have strayed. In our darkest despair, we can confidently say like the psalmist, "*I wait for the Lord, more than watchmen wait for the morning.*" And as surely as the waiting watchmen will experience the break of dawn, we who repent will experience God's abounding love.



Are you aware of your sins? Are you longing for God's total forgiveness? Cry out to Him now, for He will surely restore you with His unfailing love.

*Lord, thank You for never giving up on me and always loving me.
I know I can cry to You, and You will always forgive and never
condemn me. Amen.*

Day
28

Saturday
25 Mar 2023

□ Bible Reading: [Luke 24:44-53](#)

OUR PART IN THE SALVATION STORY

*"The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day ..."
(Luke 24:46)*

He had to suffer, die, and rise from the dead. This was our Saviour's mission, and He accomplished it to the tee. On the cross, the Beloved Son was forsaken by the Father. Bearing every sin of every sinner, Jesus experienced the full measure of God's wrath. He was the undeserving scapegoat, the slaughtered Lamb, the sinless One, punished in every sinner's stead. It was out of His grace for us that He hung on that cross in public disgrace. His pain was beyond human understanding, but His love for us kept Him there.

In the tomb, death could not keep its hold on Jesus. By God's resurrection power, Jesus' marred body was raised and transformed into an imperishable one. This same power sets all repentant sinners free from sin's power! Have we fully understood the reason for His suffering, death, and resurrection? Has Jesus' painful journey been made a mockery when we turn the Passion events into a mere Christian cliché or chant?

Jesus was committed to His mission. He fulfilled His part of the salvation story. Our part is to tell the story.



Are you convinced that Jesus Christ, through His death and resurrection, has destroyed sin's power over you? If you are, how then will you testify to this triumph?

Jesus, forgive me if I have any trace of doubt in Your finished work to save me. Restore my faith in You, and empower me to be Your witness. Amen.

□ Bible Reading: Psalm 130

WAITING AND WATCHING WITH HOPE

*I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word
I put my hope. (Psalm 130:5)*

5th

Sunday in Lent
26 Mar 2023



Day
29

Monday
27 Mar 2023

□ Bible Reading: Acts 20:7-12

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND EUTYCHUS

"Don't be alarmed," he said. "He's alive!" (Acts 20:10)

Ah, Eutychus, the young man in the window who dozed off, fell off and died! How old was Eutychus? Why did he sit in the open window? What caused him to fall asleep? What was his spiritual condition?

How often has Eutychus been considered the main character of this story, and his slumber used as an example to warn, comfort, or even entertain? How often have we missed the Chief Character of this story – God's Holy Spirit!

Recall Jesus' promise in Acts 1:8 to His disciples: *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses ... to the ends of the earth."* The book of Acts thereafter reveals the Holy Spirit and His unstoppable power – through God's Church. This midnight miracle is one of the proofs of His power.

Sleep overpowered Eutychus, but God's resurrection power prevailed. The Holy Spirit, through Paul, restored Eutychus' life. One thing is sure, God had saved Eutychus to be Christ's witness to the ends of the earth!

It is said that chapter 29 of Acts is still being written, and we are the chosen cast. But remember, God's Holy Spirit is still the Chief Character.



Christ has chosen you to bear fruit that lasts. Will you play your part in God's salvation story, and allow the Holy Spirit to reveal His power through you?

*Dear God, may the power of Your Holy Spirit be seen through me.
Use me mightily as Your witness. Amen.*

☐ Bible Reading: Ephesians 2:1-10

LIFE WITHOUT CHRIST VERSUS LIFE WITH CHRIST

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions ... (Ephesians 2:4-5)

Day
30
Tuesday
28 Mar 2023

Dead on arrival. This is the dark truth about every newborn. Every human DNA carries a dangerous spiritual code – SIN.

Without Christ, we are dead in our sins, and alienated from God. Our hearts are turned towards evil, our thoughts controlled by the devil. Our sins give Satan a foothold to entice us into all kinds of rebellion. We are by nature self-seeking and self-glorifying. Satan pounces on this sinful nature, and puts us on life's runaway train fuelled by our sins. Life becomes out of control. Our destination: Hell.

With Christ, God forgives and blots out all our sins. We are reconciled to God, living as His children, ambassadors, and masterpieces! Our hearts and thoughts are renewed to follow God's will. His Holy Spirit takes control, empowering us to resist the devil's temptations. Pride turns into humility. We are taken off the runaway train. Life has a goal – pleasing God. Our destination: Heaven!

How can hell-bound rebels like us be saved from God's wrath? It is only by God's grace, freely given through His Son, Jesus Christ. In repentance and faith we receive this free gift of love, and are reborn into a new life with a new identity!



Which life are you living now?

*Dear God, thank You for Your saving grace through Jesus Christ.
Amen.*

Day
31

Wednesday
29 Mar 2023

□ Bible Reading: Jeremiah 32:1-9, 36-41

HOPE IN THE DARKEST NIGHT

"I will surely gather them from ... where I banish them in my furious anger and great wrath; I will bring them back ... and let them live in safety." (Jeremiah 32:37)

The outlook was very bleak for Judah. Jerusalem was under siege, and Jeremiah the prophet was under arrest for courageously proclaiming the truth: This was the end. There would be no miraculous reversal. Jerusalem would fall, and the King would be exiled.

Just as God's people faced exile then, many things we face today may drive us to despair. Perhaps you struggle with personal failures, relational conflicts, financial problems, or a dead-end career. Or perhaps you are disillusioned by hypocrisy in the church, or lack of fruits in ministry. Or possibly, you look at our national politics, the cruelty inflicted on innocent lives in crimes and wars, the ever-rising cost of living, and think, "The outlook is very bleak for us, too."

In the midst of Judah's darkness, though, there was a ray of hope. God instructed Jeremiah to buy a field, and he obeyed. This prophetic act was meant to assure Israel that, beyond the exile, a time of redemption will come. They will be restored to the land, reinstated as God's people, given transformed hearts, and an everlasting covenant. And when that time comes, fields will be bought and sold again.



What saps your hope and drives you to despair? Will you choose to trust in God, who promises redemption and restoration even in the midst of these things?

Lord, thank You for hope even in the bleakest times. Even in the darkest night of Good Friday, help us to live in the unshakeable hope of Easter Sunday. Amen.

□ Bible Reading: 1 Samuel 16:11-13

PURPOSE IN INSIGNIFICANCE

"There is still the youngest," Jesse answered. "He is tending the sheep." (1 Samuel 16:11)

Day
32
Thursday
30 Mar 2023

In yesterday's reading, the Southern Kingdom, Judah, faced exile; today's reading takes us back about 500 years to the end of the reign of Saul, the first king of united Israel. It begins with Samuel's question to Jesse, "*Are these all the sons you have?*" The context is that Saul had lost God's favour because of his disobedience, so God sent Samuel to Jesse's household to anoint a new king. Jesse's sons came before him one by one, but none of them was God's chosen.

Jesse replies, "*There is still the youngest.*" The word "youngest" (*qatan*) here, not only implies diminutive size and age, but also a lack of importance. Yes, David was so insignificant that Jesse had not even called him in until Samuel queried him. Yet God, who does not look at the outward appearance but at the heart (16:7), chose him to be the next king of Israel.

And what was the "runt", the *qatan*, doing? His job was to care for the sheep, a task which his eldest brother Eliab looked down on (17:28). Yet it was his on-the-job training in this mundane, insignificant position that gave him the courage and skill to confront and slay Goliath (17:34-37).



Do you sometimes feel insignificant when facing the overwhelming tasks and needs around you? Will you nevertheless seek God's purpose for you, and walk with Him to fulfil it?

Lead us, Good Shepherd, and help us find and fulfil Your purpose for our lives. Remind us daily that our significance is found only in You. Amen.

Day
33
Friday
31 Mar 2023

□ Bible Reading: Philippians 1:21-30

LIFE AND DEATH

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. (Philippians 1:21)

From the Old Testament Saul, we now turn to his New Testament namesake, who was renamed Paul. We are immediately confronted with today's key verse: "*For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*" What powerful words. What do they mean? Why did Paul write them?

Paul wrote Philippians under house arrest, awaiting his trial before Caesar. One of his motives was to let his recipients know that their suffering – detention for him, and persecution for them – was worthwhile, because it glorified Christ and advanced the gospel.

There was a very real possibility that Paul might die, depending on the outcome of his pending trial. For us, living through this pandemic has made us equally aware of our mortality. Yet Paul could face his death fearlessly because it led to the greatest gain – full union with Jesus.

Knowing Jesus transforms our perspectives of life and death. In regards to how we should live, the passage tells us that for Paul, living meant building up God's people; and for the Philippians, it meant reflecting the gospel in thought, word, and deed, being united in spirit and evangelistic purpose, and courageously facing opposition.



Will you deepen your relationship with Jesus, allowing Him to change the way you see your own life and death?

Thank You, Jesus. Your sacrificial death has meant that in my own death, I get to be fully with You. Until then, may I live wholly for You. Amen.

□ Bible Reading: Mark 10:32-34

WILL YOU STILL FOLLOW?

"... who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise." (Mark 10:34)

Day
34
Saturday
1 Apr 2023

This is the third time Jesus told His disciples that He was going to the cross. Sadly, each time He tried, they failed to understand what He was telling them. The first time, Peter tried to dissuade Him and was harshly rebuked (8:31-33). The second time, the disciples began arguing over who was the greatest (9:30-34).

Let us now join Jesus and His disciples for this third time. Feel the stones and hard-packed soil beneath your feet as you walk on the road to Jerusalem with them. Observe the disciples' astonishment and the fear on the faces of the other pilgrims on the road. Possibly, these emotions were evoked by Jesus' brazenness in leading the way back to where His life had been threatened before (John 11:8, 16). Listen as Jesus foretells what lies ahead for Him – betrayal, condemnation, humiliation, death, and resurrection.

Again, we see the disciples' failure to understand, as James and John request to sit at Jesus' right and left hand (10:35-45). They followed a Saviour whose unparalleled greatness was in His self-sacrificial love, and yet they clung to worldly ideas of greatness – power and position. What about us?



Will you forsake your own ambitions and ideas of greatness and follow Jesus? Will you love, serve, and lay down your life for others as He did?

Lord, forgive us when we, too, have failed to understand Your teachings. Help us to hear what You would tell us, and strengthen us to follow You daily. Amen.



Palm Sunday
2 Apr 2023

□ Bible Reading: Psalm 31:9-16

GOD'S TENDER MERCY

*I have become like broken pottery ... But I trust in you, LORD ...
(Psalm 31:12b, 14a)*



□ Bible Reading: [John 12:1-11](#)

GIVING WHOLEHEARTEDLY TO GOD

"She has done a beautiful thing to me." (Matthew 26:10; cf. John 12:7-8)

Day
35
Monday
3 Apr 2023

John invites us into Jesus' final week by contrasting two persons who followed Jesus. Mary, a devoted disciple, ignores the taboos of her society in her commitment to Jesus by choosing to anoint His feet with expensive perfume and wiping them with her hair. Her actions show her desire to honour Jesus through her hospitality and humility by performing the menial task of a servant in washing feet. She also demonstrates that no expense is too great as she lavishes extravagant love through her act of devotion. Judas, on the other hand, is concerned about financial losses and becomes calculative. Due to his greed, he can only think, "What's in it for me?"

Mary's generous giving is contrasted with Judas' selfish pilfering. Mary exemplifies Jesus' sacrificial giving as He journeys all the way to the cross to give Himself fully for us, through His death. Some of us tend to hold back from giving ourselves fully to God because of our insecurities, worries, or fear about our uncertain future. May Mary's actions inspire us to give ourselves fully and wholeheartedly to God.



As you reflect on your journey of following Jesus, ask Him to reveal to you anything that might keep you from giving yourself fully to Him.

*Lord, I desire to give myself fully to You. Grant me the courage to surrender all that keeps me from giving wholeheartedly to You.
Amen.*

Day
36
Tuesday
4 Apr 2023

□ Bible Reading: [John 12:20-36](#)

THE HOUR HAS COME

"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified ... Whoever serves me must follow me ... My Father will honour the one who serves me." (John 12:23, 26)

As Jesus journeys to the cross, He knows that the hour has come for Him to lay down His life for others. Many are uncomfortable and shy away from talking about death or dying. However, Jesus talks about His death candidly because He knows that death is ultimately the path to life, where God is glorified.

As followers of Jesus, we are invited to die to self like Him. This consists of parts of our lives that bind us, such as our fears; the need to be right or in control; anger and resentment; guilt and disappointments; attachment to power, wealth, and reputation; the ways in which we hurt one another and damage relationships. The work of dying to self is difficult, painful, and soul-troubling, as we give up our rights to be in charge of our lives and in control. However, dying is not the end, but a means of transformation as we exchange our sinful life for a new way of living and being in Christ (Ephesians 4:22-24). Jesus died that we might live. He invites us to join Him in His death so that we can join Him in His life.



How willing are you to die with Christ and freely exchange your life for His?

Lord, I want to know Christ personally, experience His resurrection power, be a partner in His suffering, and go all the way with Him to death itself (Philippians 3:10-12). Amen.

□ Bible Reading: [John 13:21-32](#)

TROUBLED IN SPIRIT?

Now Jesus was deeply troubled, and he exclaimed, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me!" (John 13:21 NLT)

Day
37
Wednesday
5 Apr 2023

Have you ever felt as if the weight of the world is on your shoulders? Ever experienced that moment before you dive headlong into a responsibility you know is more than you can handle, and yet you know in your heart of hearts that it is a responsibility you have been called to take on?

Just before His final Passover meal, "*Jesus knew that his hour had come ...*" (John 13:1 NLT). He knew the seemingly insurmountable challenge that lay before Him. He knew that even those closest to Him would not understand, or be able to support Him through this difficult time. Worse still, He knew that they would betray and abandon Him.

In these moments when what lies ahead towers over us like a dark cloud, it is easy to sink into frustration, gloom, and anger. And yet Jesus continued to act and speak in love. In the darkest of nights, He held firm to His calling because He knew His Father. He knew that as He honoured the Father through His obedience, His Father would sustain, honour, and empower Him for His Father's glory.



Bring your cares and anxieties before the Lord. Ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate your mind and remind you of His promises.

Lord, open my eyes to the truth of Your Word. Grant me wisdom as I read, and clarity and discernment as I apply Your Word in my daily life. Amen.

Day
38

Maundy Thursday
6 Apr 2023

□ Bible Reading: [Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19](#)

THE GOODNESS OF GOD

*What shall I return to the LORD for all his goodness to me?
(Psalm 116:12)*

The psalmist speaks of his experience of God's rescue from a life-threatening situation. Cords of death entangled him, and the anguish of the grave found him. And the Lord delivered him.

In response, the psalmist affirms his love for the Lord. He resolves to call on Him as long as he lives. He wonders how he can repay the Lord for all His goodness. The question is rhetorical, acknowledging the fact that he cannot. There is no way anyone can repay God for His goodness. Does that come with a sense of relief? Guilt? Gratitude? There is no way we can repay God's goodness.

Realising this, he responds with praise! He vows to offer praise and acknowledges God for what He has done in the midst of the congregation. In faith and humility, he vows obedient service and affirms his loyalty to the Lord: *"Truly I am your servant, LORD."*

The psalmist shares what he has learnt from the experience. He learnt that God carefully watches over His people, and no one dies apart from His plan, or without His approval. God intervenes to avert the premature death of those who belong to Him.



As we remember the Lord's redemption, spend time to praise and adore Him. Remember He carefully watches over His people.

*Give us a pure heart that we may see You,
A humble heart that we may hear You,
A heart of love, that we may serve You,
A heart of faith that we may love You.
(Dag Hammarskjöld)*

□ Bible Reading: [Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9](#)

JESUS' PERFECT SACRIFICE

... he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. (Hebrews 5:7)

Day
39
Good Friday
7 Apr 2023

The author of Hebrews probably knew of a number of times in the life of Jesus when He “*offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears*”. For us limited to the Gospel narratives, Gethsemane seems to offer the most telling account about such times.

Mark records that Jesus’ soul was “*overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death ... Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. ‘Abba Father ... everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will but what you will.’*” (Mark 14:34-36)

Even though He was the Son of God, suffering was part of His appointed cup – suffering that led ultimately to His death. When He needed help to drink the cup, He sought His heavenly Father to whom He freely expressed His anguish and sorrow.

Jesus is our source of eternal salvation, the great High Priest who understands our suffering because He Himself experienced deep anguish. His perfect sacrifice allows us to approach God’s throne openly and unashamedly, free to find mercy and grace in times of need. In Him there is full forgiveness, there is full acceptance.



Ponder on Jesus’ journey to the cross – His courage, His love, His anguish, His obedience, the perfect redemption. Reflect on what it means to be fully forgiven in Christ.

*Father, thank You that we can come to You confidently, assured of Your unfailing love and mercy. Hallowed be Thy name.
Thank You, Jesus, for Your perfect sacrifice. Amen.*

Day
40
Holy Saturday
8 Apr 2023

□ Bible Reading: [Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16](#)

HIS LOVE NEVER FAILS

*My times are in your hands ... save me in your unfailing love.
(Psalm 31:15a, 16b)*

Psalm 31, a psalm of David, begins with cries for help, pleas for God's rescue. Verses 1-4 contain rich verbs and images of aid – refuge, deliver, rescue, turn Your ear, rock of refuge, strong fortress, save, rock, lead, guide, free. The Lord is seen as a place of safety in troubled times.

God is called upon to save and rescue not on the merit of the one praying, but because of God's own character – in His righteousness and for His name's sake.

In verses 14-16, David asserts his trust in the Lord, declaring, “*My times are in your hands ... save me in your unfailing love.*” In his darkest time, David calls on the Lord who does not fail. In Jesus' darkest time, He, too, calls on the One who does not fail. And finally, our Saviour climactically echoes David's expression of trust at the cross as He breathes His last: “*Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.*” (Luke 23:46; cf. Psalm 31:5)

In the midst of your pain, sorrow, and disorientation in this life, direct your thoughts and prayers to a God whom we can trust, whose love never fails. Abide in Him.



Read the verbs and images of aid in verses 1-4. Which catches your attention? Take time to reflect and meditate on the word or image.

Almighty Father, teach me to trust You. Help me know Your unfailing love and kindness. Open my eyes to see You, Emmanuel, God-with-us. Amen.

□ Bible Reading: Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

THE LORD HAS DONE THIS!

*I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the LORD has done
... this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad.
(Psalm 118:17, 24)*



Easter Sunday
9 Apr 2023

CONTRIBUTORS

The Board of Worship and Music would like to praise God and thank all who contributed to produce this inspiring Lent Meditations booklet.

Bishop Joshua Khong graduated from Seminari Theoloji Malaysia in 2003, and has served in three churches in the Perak District and one in the Eastern District. He was elected TRAC Bishop in 2020. He is married to Elaine, and they are blessed with two daughters, Ruth and Sarah, who are currently in Canada.

Aaron Liu hails from Melaka and enjoys journeying with people to discover and deepen their faith in Christ. He loves to see Scripture come alive and lives transformed for the glory of Jesus Christ. He is the pastor-in-charge of Wesley Methodist Church and Taman Asean Methodist Church in Melaka.

Jane Tan is married to a pastor and enjoys her role as a pastor's wife. She has always been interested in the Worship and Creative & Performing Arts ministries, and is thankful to God that she has been able to be involved in these ministries in the churches where they have served. She is also passionate about discipleship, especially the discipling of the next generation.

Rev. Jonathan Chan is currently pastoring Wesley Methodist Church Taiping. He has been in full-time ministry for 13 years, and spent the majority of the time serving in youth ministry. His passion is to see people both young and old come to know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour. His heart is for evangelism and worship. He enjoys music, badminton, and quality time with friends.

Rev. Christopher Rao is the pastor-in-charge of Wesley Methodist Church Kuantan, and is also currently the Chairman of the TRAC Board of Evangelism. He enjoys spiritual retreats and the ministry of the Word. He is married to Rhema and they are blessed with two children, Yohanen and Rania.

Celine Choong attends Whispering Hope Methodist Church Kuala Lumpur where she serves as CG leader and worship leader. She also contributes to youth camps such as YLDP and YouthQuake. In her free time she can be found walking her dogs or climbing some rocks. She is blissfully married to Wen Shan.

Dr. Philip Ho is a member of the Pastoral Care Team in Canning Garden Methodist Church Ipoh. He is a cardiologist by profession and is married to Sue Mei, a nephrologist. They enjoy swimming, running, and cycling together. They are blessed with two daughters, Elaine who works as a research software engineer in the UK, and Emily who is a lawyer.

Gladys Tan is currently a member of Trinity Methodist Church Petaling Jaya. She enjoys using the gifts and talents God has given her to minister to others. Married to Rev. Paul Christie, they are both blessed with two sons, Silas and Lucas.

Kiew Sieh Jin is a member of Taman Ujong Methodist Church Seremban, where he serves as a lay preacher, worship leader, and Captain of the Boys' Brigade. He is happily married to Chen May and has two often endearing, sometimes naughty, but always beloved children, Chao Zhen and Chao En.

Tang Swee Kit worships at Trinity Methodist Church Petaling Jaya and serves as the Assistant Director of the TRAC Institute for Christian Ministry (ICM). She is passionate about her calling to help people grow and deepen their relationship with God, and enjoys creating space for others to encounter God at retreats. Besides journeying alongside others as a spiritual director, she enjoys taking walks, nature, and photography.

Lim Siew Lan enjoys being outdoors and is currently reading about and exploring walking as spiritual formation. She enjoys facilitating formation groups and worships with Damansara Utama Methodist Church Petaling Jaya.

Juwita Suwito is a singer-songwriter with a heart for worship and a shy penchant for the written word. She currently chairs the TRAC Board of Worship & Music, and worships with Damansara Utama Methodist Church Petaling Jaya. She is also on a mission to unite worshippers to light up Malaysia with heart songs of the land through the Malaysian Worship Collective.

Dr. Richard Chan (Photographer) is the Lay Leader of Wesley Methodist Church Kuala Lipis. He is a dentist by profession and owns a private practice in Kuala Lipis. After he is done peering into people's mouths for the day, there is nothing he loves more than to capture images on his Canon cameras.

Mrs. Angie Seow (Editor) and her husband, Peter, are with Wycliffe Malaysia, and have lived and worked in Papua, Indonesia, since December 2004. They have three adult children: David, Daryl, and Hannah. Currently, Angie is the SIL Asia Bible Translation Coordination Team facilitator, as well as Senior Translation Consultant and on the Editorial Board of *Journal of Translation* for SIL International. When in Malaysia, the Seows worship at Canning Garden Methodist Church Ipoh.

Gina Yap Lai Yoong (Design & Typesetting) is a creative producer who has been helping out various churches and Christian organisations with their creative ventures in the past decade. From publications to productions, her capabilities to write and tell stories through various mediums give her the advantage to make full use of the platforms given to send across messages effectively. Find out more about her at www.ginayaplaiyoong.com or simply get connected on social media (/ginayaplaiyoong).



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