



UNIVERSITYchapel



Lenten Manual

2020



SOJOURNCHURCH

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Lent

Lent, a period of 40 days for repentance and seeking God, is mentioned in article 5 of the Council of Nicaea. It met in 325 AD and wrote the “Nicene Creed.” The Creed is still used as the measure of orthodox Christianity. In many languages the word used for the season of Lent implies ‘forty’. However, the English word ‘Lent’ grew out of the Anglo-Saxon (early English) word meaning to ‘lengthen’. The days get longer as Spring begins. Just as the light and warmth of the sun lengthens the days and promotes the budding of new life, so also the light of the Son ‘lengthens’ our connection to himself. We should not place an over-emphasis on our own efforts. By stepping away from the frenetic activity of daily life, we create space for God to do his work. Our role during Lent is to cooperate with God’s grace and initiatives. It is a time to quieten and abide with the Lord, not forcing the pace by our own striving.

Lent commemorates Jesus fasting and temptation in the desert (Matthew 4:1-11), and therefore is a time characterized by repentance as we prepare for Jesus’ passion and resurrection at Easter. It begins on Ash Wednesday, so called because ashes (an ancient sign of penitence) are marked on the forehead with the sign of the cross. It is a tradition that dates back to the early Middle Ages.

The most important reason to practice Lent is to draw near to Jesus Christ and become like him. Lent is a season of intentional discipleship under Christ and with Christ. We also practice Lent to bond more closely with fellow Christians who are on the same journey, not only in our local church but also around the world. Along the way, our sin and enslaving habits are put to death, and we learn to experience Christ’s resurrection power.

Lent is not a test of endurance, or a season of misery and suffering. It is an opportunity to root ourselves more deeply in Christ and the new life he offers. We allow the Spirit of God to establish the story of our salvation and the love of God to the deepest parts of our souls. How we create space for this to happen varies and it is important to choose an way of Lenten observance that is helpful to you. Since the Christian life is lived in community as Christ’s body, it is important not to over individualize what we do. It is beneficial to share some communal practices and observances too. Self-examination is central to the season and should be given due consideration when we make our decisions regarding how we will observe Lent.

The three central practices of Lent are:

- ◇ PRAYER. Prayer is a practice of dwelling with God. We get in touch with ourselves and orient our hearts and minds towards God. It is listening as much as speaking.
- ◇ FASTING. By fasting we free ourselves from the demands of the self and find peace in God. It may be total (on set days) or partial (a food group/activity) through the season.

- ◇ ALMSGIVING. Lent turns us not only towards God, but also towards others in compassion for those who are poor and needy.. It challenges the subtlety of our addiction to possessions, pleasure, and affluence. It is a season for giving of time and resources to help others,

Here are some examples of specific activities to consider:

- ◇ Make space for God. Set aside time to be quiet and read Scripture or pray.
- ◇ Read the Bible;
- ◇ Read a Christian book by a good author on a subject relevant to you.
- ◇ Keep a Journal.
- ◇ Practice thanksgiving (make a daily log or journal of how God has blessed you)
- ◇ Spend time listening to God, (see the weekly activity of “Contemplative prayer”)
- ◇ Fast by choosing not to eat specific foods (meat, candy, bread, ...) for the season. Set aside one day a week on which you will go without one meal, Spend the time intentionally seeking God
- ◇ Give up something distracting or unhelpful (Facebook, Netflix, video games, shopping, ...)
- ◇ Give money sacrificially to your church or a ministry project.
- ◇ Visit someone who is a shut-in, (elderly, sick, alone)
- ◇ Invite someone who lives alone to have a meal with you
- ◇ Cook and deliver a meal to someone in need.

Remember that the goal is not suffering or discomfort. It is to make space for God to work in our lives. Keep this very clearly in mind as you make your choices about your Lenten practices.

How to use this Manual

The manual is divided into three sections:

- Morning Devotion *(See instructions on next page)*
- Daily Spiritual Exercise
- Compline (a short evening devotion before bed)

For those who have the time and motivation you can do all three exercises each day. If this is difficult, at the least try to do one daily devotion. It is then possible to do the Spiritual Exercises when you have time (e.g. on Saturdays). If you miss a day for whatever reason, don't try to catch up, continue with the specified day in the manual. While the manual is designed to provide a fairly comprehensive and intense daily spiritual regimen for the season of Lent, it is absolutely fine to use it over a longer period if you are doing less each day. Always keep the goal in mind—you are trying to draw closer to Christ and make space for his Spirit to work in you. The goal is *not* to “finish.”

The manual is designed for the practice of maintaining Sunday (the day of the resurrection) as a feast day (i.e. excluding it from the count of 40 days). This means that Lent ends on Easter Sunday. If you are planning to do the forty days straight and end on Palm Sunday, use the “Holy Week” devotions as your Sunday exercises (you should substitute the Scripture readings with those assigned to each Sunday).

A recommended memory verse/passage is provided at the start of each week. There are two options: One—learn a key Bible passage from different places each week (they are shorter); or Two—learn part of Matthew 7 each week until you have it memorized. It is the last part of the Sermon on the Mount. Scripture memory is a powerful tool for taking God's Word deep into your soul. Give it a try. You are welcome to choose other verses/passages to learn instead. The verses are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV) but feel free to use a different translation if you prefer.

Consider inviting others to join you in your Lenten practices. For example,

- Memorize Scripture together,
- Plan a weekly fellowship meal,
- Choose an act of service to do together.
- Make the most of the weekly discipleship ministries:
 - Commit to attending Home Group faithfully every week,
 - Come to Morning Prayer on a Monday (7.00–7.45 am),
 - or Holy Communion on Wednesday (7.00–7.45 am) or Friday (8.00–8.45 am).
 - Join the “New Eyes” Bible study, Wednesday evenings (1 Thessalonians starts March 11th).
 - Join BSF on a Tuesday evening (men) or Thursday morning (women).
 - Serve in the ESL ministry on Wednesdays 9.30–12.00.

You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.

Jeremiah 29:13 (ESV)

Guide for the Morning Devotion

(with Example)

Each morning is structured around prayer, Scripture and contemplation. Read the assigned passages through (or just one of them) and then do a devotional reading of one or two verses. The steps of devotional reading are explained below and then an example is given using one of the first week's memory verses.

Steps for Devotional Reading:

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Begin a series of readings placing the emphasis on different words each time.
4. Pause for a moment after each reading to contemplate the meaning that is highlighted.
5. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Try to do at least the first three. Go down the list as far as you would like.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).

 - iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun — e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
 - v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).
 - vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word — e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).
 - vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases — e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)
 - viii. ARTICLES (a & the).
6. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what has spoken to you.

Take some time to pray through what the Spirit has spoken to you through his Word and also pray for your concerns and the concerns of the world and the church.

EXAMPLE

1. Choose the verse (e.g. from Matthew 7:1-2)

2. Identify & emphasize the NOUNS

“Judge not, that **you** be not judged. ²For with the **judgment you** pronounce **you** will be judged, and with the **measure you** use **it** will be measured to you.

3. Identify & emphasize the VERBS

“**Judge** not, that you **be not judged**. ²For with the judgment you **pronounce** you **will be judged**, and with the measure you **use** it will be **measured** to you.

4. Identify & emphasize the DETERMINATIVES

“Judge not, **that** you be not judged. ²**For** with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and **with** the measure you use it will be measured to you.

5. Identify & emphasize the ADJECTIVES *(None in this case)*

“Judge not, that you be not judged. ²For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.

6. Identify & emphasize the ADVERBS

“Judge **not**, that you be **not** judged. ²For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.

6. Identify & emphasize the PREPOSITIONS

“Judge not, that you be not judged. ²For **with** the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and **with** the measure you use it will be measured to you.

7. Continue working through the various parts and figures of speech in a similar way.

Thoughts

He who is filled with love is filled with God himself.

Augustine of Hippo

Human things must be known to be loved:
but divine things must be loved to be known.

Blaise Pascal

Love must be learned again and again ...
Hate needs no instruction, but waits only to be provoked.

Katherine Anne Porter

What you love and what you hate reveal what you are.

Dr Bob Jones Sr

Hope is not the conviction that something will turn out well
but the certainty that something makes sense,
regardless of how it turns out.

Vaclav Havel

Week 1

Memory verse for the week

Isaiah 40:28-29 (ESV)

- ²⁸ Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.
- ²⁹ He gives power to the faint,
and to him who has no might he increases strength.

or

Matthew 7:1-5 (ESV)

“Judge not, that you be not judged. ² For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. ³ Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

O MY Saviour Christ, Christ my Saviour!
Lord, let a new manner of life prove that a new spirit hath descended on me:
for true penitence is new life;
and true praise unremitted penitence,
 and the observation of a perpetual sabbath from sin,
 its occasions, fuel, and danger.
For as penitence destroys old sins,
 so do new sins destroy penitence.
O God, my heart is ready; so saith the Psalmist:
but I fear, Lord, lest mine should not be ready.
I would that it were: I grieve, if it be not.
Lord, prepare it: assist my disposal,
 and supply my preparation of it.
I will put my sins before my sight;
that they may not be put before Thine.
AMEN

Andrewes, L. (1865). *The Private Devotions of Dr. Lancelot Andrewes, Part II*. (J. M. Neale, Trans.) (A New Edition, p. 153). Oxford; London: John Henry and James Parker.

Read Psalm 38; Daniel 9:3-6, 17-19; 1 Timothy 6:6-19

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
 2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
 3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).
-

- iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun — e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
- v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).
- vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word — e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).
- vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases — e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)
- viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

- 4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

- 5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

Thou hast prepared for me a more healthful sorrow:
O deny not Thy servant when he begs sorrow of Thee.
Give me a deep contrition for my sins,
a hearty detestation and loathing of them,
hating them worse than death with torments.
Give me grace entirely, presently, and for ever, to forsake them;
to walk with care and prudence, with fear and watchfulness, all my days;
to do all my duty with diligence and charity, with zeal and a never-fainting spirit;
to redeem the time, to trust upon Thy mercies,
to make use of all the instruments of grace,
to work out my salvation with fear and trembling;
that Thou mayest have the glory of pardoning all my sins,
and I may reap the fruit of all Thy mercies and all Thy graces,
of Thy patience and long-suffering,
even to live a holy life here,
and to reign with Thee for ever,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Taylor, J. (1890). *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living* (pp. 205-206). London: Longmans, Green, and Co.; Henry Frowde.

Read Psalm 77; Genesis 39; Galatians 2:11—end (of chapter)

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).

iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions –if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).

iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun – e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)

v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly – e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).

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vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases – e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)

viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

For this day's sins, O God, grant us mercy:
for sloth that wasted the hours
for haste which outran its benedictions;
for fear that frustrated bold hopes
for dullness that took everything for granted;
for anger that burst forth destructively
for indifference that smothered the soul;
for suspicion wrongly held
for trust cheaply betrayed;
for indecision which avoided the evil
for compromise which disguised it.

*Samuel H. Miller (1900-1968)
Dean of Harvard Divinity School and Baptist minister*

Read Psalm 3, 7; Genesis 40; Galatians 3:1-14

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
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viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

O God, early in the morning I cry to you.
Help me to pray
And to concentrate my thoughts on you:
I cannot do this alone.
In me there is darkness,
But with you there is light;
I am lonely, but you do not leave me;
I am feeble in heart, but with you there is help;
I am restless, but with you there is peace.
In me there is bitterness, but with you there is patience;
I do not understand your ways,
But you know the way for me...
Restore me to liberty;
And enable me so to live now
That I may answer before you and before me.
Lord, whatever this day may bring
Your name be praised.

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945)
German theologian and anti-Nazi
who wrote this prayer while awaiting execution*

Read Psalm 71; Genesis 41:1-24; Galatians 3:15-22

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
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 - vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases – e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)
 - viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

- 4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

- 5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Week 2

Memory verse for the week

Romans 8:1-2 (ESV)

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

or

Matthew 7:6-8 (ESV)

⁶ “Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

⁷ “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

OUR Father, we wish this morning to come to Thee anew in Christ Jesus. Many of us can look back to the happy moment when first we saw the law fulfilled in Christ, wrath appeased, death destroyed, sin forgiven, and our souls saved. Oh it was a happy morning—a blessed time. Never did the sun seem to shine so brightly as then, when we beheld the Sun of Righteousness, and basked in His light. Many days have passed since then with some of us, and every day we have had proofs of the faithfulness of God to the gospel of His Son. We have proved the power of Jesus' blood for daily cleansing; we have proved the power of His Divine Spirit for daily teaching, guidance, and sanctification; and now we want no other rock to build upon, than that which we have built upon; we desire no other hope, nor even to dream of any other, but that hope which Thou hast set before us in the Gospel, to which hope we have fled for refuge, and which hope we still have, as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.

But Lord, we would still begin again this morning by looking unto Jesus Christ anew—whatever may be our sin, whatever Thy pure and holy eye can see amiss in us, which we cannot see: we desire to come to Jesus as sinners, guilty, lost, ruined by nature, and again to give the faith look, and to behold Him hanging on the cross for us. ...

Oh, dear Saviour, if in the course of years we have tried to add anything to the one foundation, if unconsciously we are relying now upon our knowledge, our experience, our Christian effort, we desire to clear away all this heap of rags and get down on the foundation again. None but Jesus! None but Jesus! Our soul rests in none but Jesus; and we hate and loathe, with our inmost nature, the very idea of adding anything to what He has finished, or attempting to complete what is perfect in Him.

AMEN

Spurgeon, C. H. (2009). *The Pastor in Prayer* (pp. 97-98).
Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

Read Psalm 10, 11; Genesis 41:25-45; Galatians 3:23—4:7

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
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Contemplate

4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

Risen Lord,
behind closed doors
you turned Thomas's doubt
into a shout of faith.
Take our questioning minds
and make them a gateway
to hope and trust in you,
that faith may seek
and find understanding
in your mysterious purposes and will;
for your honour and glory. Amen.

Black, I. (2011). *Prayers for All Occasions* (p. 147). London: SPCK.

Read Psalm 44; Genesis 41:46—42:5; Galatians 4:8-20

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
 2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
 3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).
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- iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun — e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
 - v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).
 - vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word — e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).

vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases — e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)

viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Day 7. Wednesday. March 4th, 2020.

Ember Day

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

Keep me afloat, O Lord,
as the waves crash around and over me,
threatening to overwhelm.
Be my constant and sure ground
as the tide of time ebbs and flows,
bringing new surprises and challenges to my shore.
Cleanse and refresh my soul
as the beach is renewed
by the incoming waters.
Make my hope soar
as the birds in flight,
and give me a song of praise
to rejoice in your goodness
in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Black, I. (2011). *Prayers for All Occasions* (p. 149). London: SPCK.

Read Psalm 6, 17; Genesis 42:6-17; Galatians 4:21—5:1

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
 2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
 3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).
-
- iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun — e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)

- v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).
- vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word — e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).
- vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases — e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)
- viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

- 4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

- 5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

I call on you, O Yahweh; hasten to me.
Listen to my voice when I call to you.
Let my prayer be set before you as incense,
the lifting up of my palms as the evening offering.
Set a guard, O Yahweh, over my mouth;
keep watch over the door of my lips.
Do not incline my heart to any evil thing,
to practice wicked deeds
with men who do iniquity;
and do not let me eat of their delicacies.
Let a righteous one strike me in kindness,
and let him chasten me.
It is oil for my head; let not my head refuse.

Ritzema, E. (Ed.). (2012). *400 Prayers for Preachers*.
Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Read Psalm 42, 43; Genesis 42:18-28; Galatians 5:2-15

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
 2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
 3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person – e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State – e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions –if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).
-
- iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun – e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)

- v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).
- vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word — e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).
- vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases — e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)
- viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

- 4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

- 5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Ember Day

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

O Lord God—who has given man the night for rest, as you have created the day in which he may employ himself in labor—grant, I pray, that my body may so rest during this night that my mind cease not to be awake to you, nor my heart faint or be overcome with torpor, preventing it from adhering steadfastly to the love of you.

While laying aside my cares to relax and relieve my mind, may I not, in the meanwhile, forget you, nor may the remembrance of your goodness and grace, which ought always to be deeply engraven on my mind, escape my memory.

In like manner, also, as the body rests may my conscience enjoy rest.

Grant, moreover, that in taking sleep I may not give indulgence to the flesh, but only allow myself as much as the weakness of this natural state requires, to my being enabled thereafter to be more alert in your service.

Be pleased to keep me so chaste and unpolluted, not less in mind than in body, and safe from all dangers, that my sleep itself may turn to the glory of your name.

But since this day has not passed away without my having in many ways offended you through my proneness to evil, in like manner as all things are now covered by the darkness of the night, so let everything that is sinful in me lie buried in your mercy.

Hear me, O God, Father and Preserver, through Jesus Christ your Son.

Amen.

JOHN CALVIN

Read Psalm 22; Genesis 42:29—end (of chapter); Galatians 5:16—end (of Chapter)

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).

 - iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun — e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
 - v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).
 - vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word — e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).
 - vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases — e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)
 - viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Day 10. Saturday. March 7th, 2020.

Ember Day; Lesser Festival—Perpetua, Felicity & companions, Martyred, Carthage, 203AD.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

Guide me, O Lord,
in all the changes and varieties of the world;
That in all things that shall happen,
I may have an evenness and tranquility of spirit;
that my soul may be wholly resigned to your
Divine will and pleasure,
never murmuring at your gentle chastisements and fatherly
correction.
Amen.

Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667)
English writer and Anglican bishop

Read Psalm 59, 63; Genesis 43:1-15; Galatians 6

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).

 - iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun — e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
 - v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).
 - vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word — e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).
 - vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases — e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)

viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Week 3

Memory verse for the week

1 John 5:1-2 (ESV)

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. ² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments.

or

Matthew 7:9-12 (ESV)

⁹ Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

¹² “So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

My God, Father, and Savior,
since you have been pleased to give me the grace to come
through the night to the present day,
now grant that I may employ it entirely in your service,
so that all my works may be to the glory of your name
and the edification of my neighbors.
As you have been pleased to make your sun shine upon the earth
to give us bodily light,
grant the light of your Spirit to illumine my understanding and
my heart.
And because it means nothing to begin well if one does not
persevere,
I ask that you would continue to increase your grace in me
until you have led me into full communion with your Son, Jesus
Christ our Lord,
who is the true Sun of our souls,
shining day and night, eternally and without end.
Hear me, merciful Father, by our Lord Jesus Christ,
Amen.

Prayer of JOHN CALVIN
Adapted by Tim Keller

Read Psalm 24, 32; Genesis 43:16—end; Hebrews 1

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).

iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions –if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).

iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun – e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)

v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly – e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).

vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word – e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).

vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases – e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)

viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

O Lord, by all your dealings with us,
whether of joy or pain, of light or darkness,
let us be brought to you.
Let us value no treatment of your grace
simply because it makes us happy
or because it makes us sad,
because it gives us or denies us what we want;
but may all that you send us bring us to you;
that knowing your perfectness,
we may be sure
in every disappointment you are still loving us,
in every darkness you are still enlightening us,
and in every enforced idleness you are giving us life,
as in his death you gave life to your Son,
our Savior, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

*Philips Brooks (1835-1893)
Episcopal bishop of Massachusetts, author
of the carol "O Little Town of Bethlehem"*

Read Psalm 50; Genesis 44:1-17; Hebrews 2:1-9

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).

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- iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun – e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
 - v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly – e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).
 - vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word – e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).
 - vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases – e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)
 - viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

- 4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

- 5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

O Lord God, now grant me the grace
not only to rest my body this day,
but to have my spiritual repose, in soul and conscience,
in your grace and love,
that I may let go of all earthly cares
so I might be comforted and eased in all ways.
And because no day passes that I don't sin in so many ways,
please bury all my offenses in your mercy,
that I might not lose your presence.
Forgive me, merciful Father, for Christ's sake.
And as I set out this day, may I walk only by your grace,
Keep me in a joyful, lively remembrance that whatever happens,
I will someday know my final rising — the resurrection —
because Jesus Christ lay down in death for me,
and rose for my justification.
In His name I pray,
Amen.

Prayer of JOHN CALVIN
Adapted by Tim Keller

Read Psalm 35; Genesis 44:18—end; Hebrews 2:10—end

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).

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- iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun — e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
 - v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).
 - vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word — e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).
 - vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases — e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)
 - viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

- 4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

- 5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

Lord, bless us, if it may be, in all our innocent endeavors.
If it may not, give us the strength to encounter what is to come,
that we be brave in peril,
constant in tribulation,
temperate in wrath
and in all changes of fortune,
and, down to the gates of death,
loyal and loving to one another.
As the clay to the potter,
as the windmill to the wind,
as children of their sire,
we beg of you this help and mercy for Christ's sake.

*Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)
Scottish essayist, novelist, and poet*

Read Psalm 34; Genesis 45:1-15; Hebrews 3:1-6

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
 2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
 3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).
-
- iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun — e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
 - v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).

- vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word – e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).
- vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases – e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)
- viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

- 4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

- 5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

Show me, O Lord, your mercy,
and delight my heart with it.
Let me find you whom I so longingly seek.
See, here is the man whom the robbers seized, mishandled,
and left half dead on the road to Jericho.
O kind-hearted Samaritan, come to my aid!
I am the sheep who wandered into the wilderness –
seek after me, and bring me home again to your fold.
Do with me what you will,
that I may stay by you all the days of my life,
and praise you with all those who are with you in heaven for all
eternity.
AMEN.

*St. Jerome (c. 347-420)
Biblical scholar and hermit*

Read Psalm 40, 41; Genesis 45:16—end; Hebrews 3:7—end

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
 2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
 3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person – e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State – e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions –if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).
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- iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun – e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)

- v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).
- vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word — e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).
- vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases — e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)
- viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

- 4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

- 5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

My good God, Father, and Savior,
grant me aid by your Holy Spirit
to now work fruitfully in my vocation,
which is from you,
all in order to love you and the people around me
rather than for my own gain and glory.
Give me wisdom, judgment and prudence,
and freedom from my besetting sins.
Bring me under the rule of true humility.
Let me accept with patience whatever amount
of fruitfulness or difficulty in my work that you give me this day.
And in all I do, help me to rest always in my Lord Jesus Christ
and in his grace alone
for my salvation and life
Hear me, merciful Father,
by our Lord Jesus Christ,
Amen.

Prayer of JOHN CALVIN
Adapted by Tim Keller

Read Psalm 3, 25; Genesis 46:1-7, 28—end; Hebrews 4:1-13

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).

iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions –if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).

iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun – e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)

v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly – e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).

vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word – e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).

vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases – e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)

viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Week 4

Memory verse for the week

Colossians 3:16-17 (ESV)

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

or

Matthew 7:13-14 (ESV)

¹³ “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴ For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

O Lord, let me not henceforth desire health or life,
except to spend them for you, with you, and in you.
You alone know what is good for me;
do, therefore, what seems best to you.
Give to me, or take from me;
conform my will to yours;
and grant that, with humble and perfect submission,
and in holy confidence,
I may receive the orders of your eternal Providence;
and may equally adore all that comes to me from you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

*Blaise Pascal (1623-1662)
French philosopher, mathematician, and mystic*

Read Psalm 5, 7; Genesis 42:1-27; Hebrews 4:14—5:10

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
 2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
 3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).
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- iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun — e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)

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- viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

- 4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

- 5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

O blessed Jesus,
you know the impurity of our affection,
the narrowness of our sympathy,
and the coldness of our love;
take possession of our souls
and fill our minds with the image of yourself;
break the stubbornness of our selfish wills
and mold us in the likeness of your unchanging love.
O you who alone can do this,
our Savior, our Lord and our God.

*William Temple (1881-1944)
Archbishop of Canterbury
and president of the Workers' Educational Association*

Read Psalm 6, 9; Genesis 47:28—48:—end ; Hebrews 5:11—6:12

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
 2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
 3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).
-
- iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun — e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
 - v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).
 - vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word — e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).

vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases — e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)

viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

O Lord God, I give you thanks
for all the benefits and gifts you constantly shower on me.
Thank you for sustaining my physical life through food and shelter;
for giving me new life through the gospel;
and for the certainty of the best and perfect life,
which is yet to come.
In light of all these blessings,
I now ask that you would not allow my affections
to be tangled in inordinate desires for the things of this world,
but let me always set my heart on things above,
where Christ, who is my life, is seated at your right hand.
Hear me, merciful Father,
by our Lord Jesus Christ,
Amen.

Prayer of JOHN CALVIN
Adapted by Tim Keller

Read Psalm 38; Genesis 49:1-32; Hebrews 6:13—end

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
 2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
 3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).
-
- iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun — e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
 - v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).

- vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word — e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).
- vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases — e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)
- viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

- 4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

- 5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Day 20. Thursday. March 19th, 2020.

Commemoration: Joseph of Nazareth (Mary's husband)

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

O Lord, teach us to humble ourselves before these children
who live the Gospel of love and drugs because we did not live the
Gospel of love.
Teach us to humble ourselves
before the problems that face our children in this generation.
Especially we pray for all parents,
that they may love their children steadfastly,
even in the face of bewilderment and grief.
Teach us to humble ourselves when we contemplate the world we
have made,
the millions that we have killed and maimed in the course of justice.
And above all make us instruments of your love,
that we may love those who call out that they love us all.
Even if we cannot help them, teach us to love them.
All this we ask in the name of God, who so loved the world,
and of his son Jesus, the lover of our souls.

*Alan Paton (1903-1989)
South African novelist*

Read Psalm 25, 147:1-12; Isaiah 11:1-10; Matthew 13:54-58

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).

iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions –if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).

iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun – e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)

v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly – e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).

vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word – e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).

vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases – e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)

viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

O merciful God, be unto me a strong tower of defense;
give me grace to await your leisure
and patiently to bear what you are doing to me;
nothing doubting or mistrusting your goodness towards me;
for you know what is good for me better than I do.
Therefore do with me in all things what you will;
only arm me, I beseech you, with your armor,
that I may stand fast; above all things,
taking to me the shield of faith;
praying always that I may refer myself wholly to your will,
abiding your pleasure and comforting myself in these troubles
which it shall please you to send me,
seeing such troubles are profitable to me;
and I am assuredly persuaded that all you do cannot but be well;
and unto you be all honor and glory;
Amen.

*Lady Jane Grey (1537-1554)
Great-granddaughter of Henry VII
charged with treason and beheaded*

Read Psalm 22; Exodus 1:1-14; Hebrews 7:11—end

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).

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- iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun – e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
 - v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly – e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).
 - vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word – e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).
 - vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases – e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)
 - viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

- 4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

- 5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Day 22. Saturday. March 21st, 2020.

Lesser Festival: Joseph Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, Martyr, 1556.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

Grant, almighty God,
that as we do not at this day look for a redeemer
to deliver us from temporal miseries,
but only carry on a warfare under the banner of the Cross
until he appear to us from heaven to gather us into his blessed
kingdom –
O grant that we may patiently bear all evils and all troubles,
and as Christ once for all poured forth the blood of the new and
eternal covenant,
and gave us also a symbol of it in the Holy Supper,
may we, confiding in so sacred a seal,
never doubt that he will always be propitious to us,
and render manifest to us the fruit of this reconciliation,
when, after having supported us for a season under the burden of
those miseries
by which we are now oppressed,
you gather us into that blessed and perfect glory
which has been procured for us by the blood of Christ our Lord,
and which is daily set before us in his Gospel,
and laid up for us in heaven,
until we at length shall enjoy it
through Christ our only Lord.
Amen.

*John Calvin (1509-1564)
French theologian and reformer in Geneva*

Read Psalm 31; Exodus 1:22—2:10; Hebrews 8

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.

3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
- i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).
-
- iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun — e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
 - v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).
 - vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word — e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).
 - vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases — e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)
 - viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Week 5

Memory verse for the week

John 14:15-17 (ESV)

¹⁵ “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.
¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

or

Matthew 7:15-20 (ESV)

¹⁵ “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

Accept, O Lord God, our Father,
the sacrifices of our thanksgiving;
This, of praise, for your great mercies already afforded to us;
And this of prayer, for the continuance and enlargement of them;
This of penance, for such only recompense as our sinful nature can
endeavor;
And this, of the love of our hearts,
As the only gift you ask or desire,
And all these, through the all-holy and atoning sacrifice
of Jesus Christ, your son, our savior.
AMEN.

*John Donne (1572 – 1631)
Metaphysical poet and
Dean of St Paul's Cathedral, London*

Read Psalm 70, 77; Exodus 2:11–22; Hebrews 9:1–14

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).

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- iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun — e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
 - v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).

- vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word – e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).
- vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases – e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)
- viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

- 4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

- 5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

O heavenly Father,
your hand replenishes all living creatures with blessing
And gives meat to the hungry in due season;
We acknowledge our meat and drink to be your gifts,
Prepared by your fatherly providence to be received by us
for the comfort of our bodies with thanksgiving:
We most humbly beg you to bless us and our duties
And to give us grace so to use all your benefits
that we may be thankful to you
and liberal to our poor neighbors,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Thomas Becon (c. 1511 – 1567)
Early English reformer

Read Psalm 54, 79; Exodus 2:23—3:20; Hebrews 9:15—end

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
 2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
 3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).
-
- iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun — e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
 - v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).

- vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word – e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).
- vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases – e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)
- viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

- 4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

- 5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Day 25. Wednesday. March 25th, 2020.

Festival: The Annunciation of Mary

[When the Archangel, Gabriel, told her she would bear the Christ]

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

O eternal and most gracious God,
Who made little things to signify great,
And conveyed to us the infinite merits of your Son
In the water of baptism,
And the Bread and Wine of your other sacrament,
Receive the sacrifice of my humble thanks,
That you have not only given me the ability to rise out of this
bed of weariness and discomfort,
But have also made this bodily rising of your grace,
A promise of a second resurrection from sin,
And of a third, to everlasting glory.
AMEN.

John Donne (1572 – 1631)

Metaphysical poet and

Dean of St Paul's Cathedral, London

Read Psalm 111, 113; 1 Samuel 2:1–10; Romans 5:12–21

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
 2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
 3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).
-

- iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun — e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
- v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).
- vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word — e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).
- vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases — e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)
- viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

- 4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

- 5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

Grant, almighty God,
as no other way of access to you is open for us
except through unfeigned humility,
that we often learn to abase ourselves with feelings of true
repentance.
May we be so displeased with ourselves as not to be satisfied
with a single confession of our iniquities.
May we continue to meditate on our sins
until we are more and more penetrated with real grief.
Then may we fly to your mercy,
prostrate ourselves before you in silence
and acknowledge no other hope than your pity,
and the intercession of your only-begotten Son.
May we be reconciled to you,
absolved from our sins,
and governed throughout the whole course of our life
by your Holy Spirit.
Let us at length enjoy the victory in every kind of contest,
and arrive at that blessed rest which you have prepared for us
by the same, our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

*John Calvin (1509-1564)
French theologian and reformer in Geneva*

Read Psalm 53, 86; Exodus 4:27—6:1; Hebrews 10:19-25

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first

three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.

- i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).
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- iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun — e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
- v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).
- vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word — e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).
- vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases — e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)
- viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

- 4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

- 5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

I worship you, Lord;
I bless you, God the Good;
I beg you, Most Holy
I fall down before you, Lover of mankind.
I give you glory, O Christ, because you, the Only Begotten, the Lord of all things;
Who alone are without sin, gave yourself to die for me.
A sinner unworthy of such a blessing;
You died the death of the cross to free my sinful soul from the bonds of sin.
What shall I give you, Lord, in return for all this kindness?
Glory to you for your love.
Glory to you for your mercy.
Glory to you for your patience.
Glory to you for forgiving us all our sins.
Glory to you for coming to save our souls.
Glory to you for your incarnation in the virgin's womb.
Glory to you for your bonds.
Glory to you for receiving the cut of the lash.
Glory to you for accepting mockery.
Glory to you for your crucifixion.
Glory to you for your burial.
Glory to you for your resurrection.
Glory to you that were preached to men and women.
Glory to you in whom they believed.
Glory to you that you were taken up into heaven.
Glory to you who sits in great glory at the Father's right hand.
Glory to you whose will it is that the sinner should be saved
Through your great mercy and compassion.
AMEN.

*St. Ephraim of Syria (c. 306 – 373)
Founder of the Persian School of Edessa*

Read Psalm 102; Exodus 6:2–23; Hebrews 10:26—end

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).

 - iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun — e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
 - v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).
 - vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word — e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).
 - vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases — e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)
 - viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

Late have I loved you,
O Beauty so ancient and so new.
You called, and broke through my defenses,
and now I long for you.
You breathed your fragrance on me,
and I drew in my breath
and now I pant for you.
I tasted you, and now I hunger and thirst for you.
You touched me,
and I burn for your peace.
AMEN.

St Augustine of Hippo (354-430)

Read Psalm 32; Exodus 7:8—end; Hebrews 11:1-16

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).

 - iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun — e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
 - v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).
 - vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word — e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).

vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases — e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)

viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Week 6

Memory verse for the week

Ephesians 6:10-12 (ESV)

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

or

Matthew 7:21-23 (ESV)

²¹ “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ ²³ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

Day 29. Monday. March 30th, 2020.

(Passiontide begins)

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

O MY Saviour Christ, Christ my Saviour!
Lord, let a new manner of life prove that a new spirit hath descended on me:
for true penitence is new life;
and true praise unremitting penitence,
and the observation of a perpetual sabbath from sin,
its occasions, fuel, and danger.
For as penitence destroys old sins,
so do new sins destroy penitence.
O God, my heart is ready; so saith the Psalmist:
but I fear, Lord, lest mine should not be ready.
I would that it were: I grieve, if it be not.
Lord, prepare it: assist my disposal,
and supply my preparation of it.
I will put my sins before my sight;
that they may not be put before Thine.
AMEN

Andrewes, L. (1865). *The Private Devotions of Dr. Lancelot Andrewes, Part II*.
(J. M. Neale, Trans.) (A New Edition, p. 153). Oxford; London: John Henry and James Parker.

Read Psalm 73, 121; Exodus 8:1-19; Hebrews 11:17-31

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).

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- iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun — e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
 - v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).
 - vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word — e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).
 - vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases — e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)
 - viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

- 4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

- 5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

Thou hast prepared for me a more healthful sorrow:
O deny not Thy servant when he begs sorrow of Thee.
Give me a deep contrition for my sins,
a hearty detestation and loathing of them,
hating them worse than death with torments.
Give me grace entirely, presently, and for ever, to forsake them;
to walk with care and prudence, with fear and watchfulness, all my days;
to do all my duty with diligence and charity, with zeal and a never-fainting spirit;
to redeem the time, to trust upon Thy mercies,
to make use of all the instruments of grace,
to work out my salvation with fear and trembling;
that Thou mayest have the glory of pardoning all my sins,
and I may reap the fruit of all Thy mercies and all Thy graces,
of Thy patience and long-suffering,
even to live a holy life here,
and to reign with Thee for ever,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Taylor, J. (1890). *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living* (pp. 205-206).
London: Longmans, Green, and Co.; Henry Frowde.

Read Psalm 35, 123; Exodus 8:20—end; Hebrews 11:32—12:2

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).

iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions –if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).

iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun – e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)

v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly – e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).

vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word – e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).

vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases – e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)

viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

For this day's sins, O God, grant us mercy:
for sloth that wasted the hours
for haste which outran its benedictions;
for fear that frustrated bold hopes
for dullness that took everything for granted;
for anger that burst forth destructively
for indifference that smothered the soul;
for suspicion wrongly held
for trust cheaply betrayed;
for indecision which avoided the evil
for compromise which disguised it.
AMEN.

*Samuel H. Miller (1900-1968)
Dean of Harvard Divinity School and Baptist minister*

Read Psalm 55, 124; Exodus 9:1-12; Hebrews 12:3-13

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).

 - iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun — e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
 - v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).

- vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word – e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).
- vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases – e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)
- viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

- 4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

- 5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

O God, early in the morning I cry to you.
Help me to pray
And to concentrate my thoughts on you:
I cannot do this alone.
In me there is darkness,
But with you there is light;
I am lonely, but you do not leave me;
I am feeble in heart, but with you there is help;
I am restless, but with you there is peace.
In me there is bitterness, but with you there is patience;
I do not understand your ways,
But you know the way for me...
Restore me to liberty;
And enable me so to live now
That I may answer before you and before me.
Lord, whatever this day may bring
Your name be praised.
AMEN.

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945)
German theologian and anti-Nazi
who wrote this prayer while awaiting execution*

Read Psalm 40, 125; Exodus 9:13—end; Hebrews 12:14—end

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).

iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions –if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).

iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun – e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)

v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly – e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).

vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word – e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).

vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases – e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)

viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

Risen Lord,
behind closed doors
you turned Thomas's doubt
into a shout of faith.
Take our questioning minds
and make them a gateway
to hope and trust in you,
that faith may seek
and find understanding
in your mysterious purposes and will;
for your honour and glory.
Amen.

Black, I. (2011). *Prayers for All Occasions* (p. 147). London: SPCK.

Read Psalm 22, 126; Exodus 10; Hebrews 13:1-16

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
 2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
 3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person – e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State – e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions –if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).
-
- iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun – e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
 - v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly – e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).
 - vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word – e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).

vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases — e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)

viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

I call on you, O Yahweh; hasten to me.
Listen to my voice when I call to you.
Let my prayer be set before you as incense,
the lifting up of my palms as the evening offering.
Set a guard, O Yahweh, over my mouth;
keep watch over the door of my lips.
Do not incline my heart to any evil thing,
to practice wicked deeds
with men who do iniquity;
and do not let me eat of their delicacies.
Let a righteous one strike me in kindness,
and let him chasten me.
It is oil for my head; let not my head refuse.
AMEN.

Ritzema, E. (Ed.). (2012). *400 Prayers for Preachers*.
Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Read Psalm 23, 127; Exodus 11; Hebrews 13:17—end

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
 2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
 3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).
-

- iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun — e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
- v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).
- vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word — e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).
- vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases — e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)
- viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

- 4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

- 5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Week 7

Memory verse for the week

1 Peter 1:3-4 (ESV)

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,

or

Matthew 7:24-27 (ESV)

²⁴ “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

Guide me, O Lord,
in all the changes and varieties of the world;
That in all things that shall happen,
I may have an evenness and tranquility of spirit;
that my soul may be wholly resigned to your
Divine will and pleasure,
never murmuring at your gentle chastisements and fatherly correction.
Amen.

*Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667)
English writer and Anglican bishop*

Read Psalm 41; Lamentations 1:1-12; Luke 22:1-23

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).

 - iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun — e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
 - v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).
 - vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word — e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).
 - vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases — e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)
 - viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

My God, Father, and Savior,
since you have been pleased to give me the grace
to come through the night to the present day,
now grant that I may employ it entirely in your service,
so that all my works may be to the glory of your name
and the edification of my neighbors.
As you have been pleased to make your sun shine upon the earth
to give us bodily light,
grant the light of your Spirit to illumine my understanding and my heart.
And because it means nothing to begin well
if one does not persevere,
I ask that you would continue to increase your grace in me
until you have led me into full communion with your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord, who is the true Sun
Lord Jesus Christ,
Amen.

Prayer of JOHN CALVIN
Adapted by Tim Keller

Read Psalm 27; Lamentations 3:1-18; Luke 22:24-53

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).

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- iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun – e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
 - v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly – e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).
 - vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word – e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).
 - vii. CONJUNCTIONS (Links phrases – e.g. and, but, also, when, etc)
 - viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

- 4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

- 5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

O Lord, by all your dealings with us,
whether of joy or pain, of light or darkness,
let us be brought to you.
Let us value no treatment of your grace
simply because it makes us happy
or because it makes us sad,
because it gives us or denies us what we want;
but may all that you send us bring us to you;
that knowing your perfectness,
we may be sure
in every disappointment you are still loving us,
in every darkness you are still enlightening us,
and in every enforced idleness you are giving us life,
as in his death you gave life to your Son,
our Savior, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

*Philips Brooks (1835-1893)
Episcopal bishop of Massachusetts, author
of the carol "O Little Town of Bethlehem"*

Read Psalm 102; Jeremiah 11:18-20 (or Wisdom 1:16—2:1, 12-22); Luke 22:54-71

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).

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- iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun — e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)
 - v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).
 - vi. PREPOSITIONS (Links noun to a word — e.g. under, from, in, outside, around, etc).
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Contemplate

- 4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

- 5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

O Lord God, now grant me the grace
not only to rest my body this day,
but to have my spiritual repose, in soul and conscience,
in your grace and love,
that I may let go of all earthly cares
so I might be comforted and eased in all ways.
And because no day passes that I don't sin in so many ways,
please bury all my offenses in your mercy,
that I might not lose your presence.
Forgive me, merciful Father, for Christ's sake.
And as I set out this day, may I walk only by your grace,
Keep me in a joyful, lively remembrance that whatever happens,
I will someday know my final rising — the resurrection —
because Jesus Christ lay down in death for me,
and rose for my justification.
In His name I pray,
Amen.

Prayer of JOHN CALVIN
Adapted by Tim Keller

Read Psalm 42, 43; Leviticus 16:2-24; Luke 23:1-25

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).

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- iv. ADJECTIVES (Describes a noun — e.g. big, silver, glowing, bright, etc)

- v. ADVERBS (Describes a verb, usually ending ...ly — e.g. quickly, happily, badly, not, etc).
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- viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

- 4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

- 5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

Lord, bless us, if it may be, in all our innocent endeavors.
If it may not, give us the strength to encounter what is to come,
that we be brave in peril,
constant in tribulation,
temperate in wrath and in all changes of fortune,
and down to the gates of death,
loyal and loving to one another.
As the clay to the potter,
as the windmill to the wind,
as children of their sire,
we beg of you this help and mercy for Christ's sake.
AMEN.

*Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)
Scottish essayist, novelist, and poet*

Read Psalm 69; Genesis 22:1-18; Hebrews 10:1-10

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person — e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State — e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions —if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).

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- viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

- 4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

- 5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Morning Devotion

Opening Prayer

1. Be silent for 2 minutes
2. Pray:

Show me, O Lord, your mercy,
and delight my heart with it.
Let me find you whom I so longingly seek.
See, here is the man whom the robbers seized, mishandled,
and left half dead on the road to Jericho.
O kind-hearted Samaritan, come to my aid!
I am the sheep who wandered into the wilderness –
seek after me, and bring me home again to your fold.
Do with me what you will,
that I may stay by you all the days of my life,
and praise you with all those who are with you in heaven for all eternity.
AMEN.

*St. Jerome (c. 347-420)
Biblical scholar and hermit*

Read Psalm 142; Hosea 6:1-6; John 2:18-22

1. Read the assigned passages through (you may choose just one).
 2. Choose the 1-2 verses that stirred your heart as the focus of your devotion.
 3. Identify the words indicated and read the verse emphasizing these. Do at least the first three and as many more as you would like. Pause to contemplate the meaning each time.
 - i. NOUNS & PRONOUNS (Thing or Person – e.g. John, crown, table, he, it, you, etc).
 - ii. VERBS (Action or State – e.g. talk, be, walk, like, remember, come, etc).
 - iii. DETERMINATIVES (Causes & conditions –if, then, because, therefore, so that, etc).
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- viii. ARTICLES (a & the).

Contemplate

- 4. Spend a few minutes in silence contemplating what the Spirit has spoken to you.

Pray

- 5. Pray over what the Spirit has spoken to you, as well as for others, the church and the world.

Day 1 . Ash Wednesday. February 26th, 2020.

1. Ash Wednesday Service

2. Spend time in self examination and repentance

Unclutter our lives, Lord
we have too much,
consume too much,
expect too much.

Grant us perspective;
to see this world
through others' eyes
than just our own.

Grant us compassion;
where there is need
to play our part
not turn aside.

Grant us gratitude
for what we have,
our daily bread
the gift of life.

Unclutter our lives, Lord,
give us space,
simplicity
thankful hearts.

God of healing,
God of wholeness,
we bring our brokenness,
our sinfulness,
our fears
and despair,
and lay them at your feet.

God of healing,
God of wholeness,
we hold out hearts and hands,
minds and souls
to feel your touch,
and know the peace
that only you can bring.

God of healing,
God of wholeness,
this precious moment
in your presence and power
grant us faith and confidence
that here broken lives
are made whole.

Day 2. Thursday. February 27th, 2020.

Thomas à Kempis. (1840). *The Little Garden of Roses and Valley of Lilies* (pp. 43-52). London: T. Jones.

Thomas a Kempis (1380 – 1471) was a “canon regular,” i.e. a priest who lives in a monastic community. He wrote one of the most significant devotional books of all time – *The Imitation of Christ*. He was involved with ‘Divotio Moderna’ (Modern Devotion) which was a reform movement calling for apostolic renewal through the re-emphasis of humility, obedience and simplicity. In some ways therefore, the movement was a precursor to the Reformation.

CHAP. XII

On the virtue of prayer, and the profit of holy reading

“Sine intermissione orata.” (1 Thes. 5:17.)

“Pray without ceasing.”—And why? Because we are girt about by tribulations and temptations; by the snares and suggestions of evil angels.

Tidings of good come rarely, war pervades all; fear within; combat without; there is no day which has no toil, no hour that we may not have the horrors of death under our eyes.

By the just judgment of God, are the nations around us ravaged by fire and sword; for by these scourges he would punish the crimes of the wicked, and lead his elect to seek for eternal blessings.

Unceasing prayer, then, is of the highest importance, to oppose as a breastplate of proof against the fiery darts of the enemy.

He that ceases to pray, renounces the conflict; and he that strives not in battle, is already overcome, and has lost the crown of victory.

But, who can pray always? and fight always?

All things are possible to him that calls on the Lord, and puts his trust in him; for “the Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him,—to all that call upon him in truth.” (Ps. 144:18.)

If you cannot pray always with the lips, pray with the spirit, and in the heart; by the fervour of your desires, and the purity of your intentions.

A firm desire to do good, and to serve God, is as a continual sacrifice offered to him on the altar of your hearts: for he “prays without ceasing,” who never ceases to do well.

He that mourns not over his past transgressions, and who sighs for farther growth in virtue, “ceases not to pray.” Say then with holy David:—“Lord, all my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hidden from thee.” (Ps. 37:10.)

2. The word of God, and holy reading, is most useful to recal our spirit, when it is distracted by external cares, or by some passion from within, that would domineer over it.

Good reading teaches us the right path of life; good examples excite our imitation, and prayer obtains from heaven the needful grace to follow these.

Reading *of* God is well; praying *to* God is better; but prayer *for* God, is the best of all.

Blessed is he, who in all his words and actions, proposes to himself no other end than the glory of God; desiring that in all and above all, he may be praised and blessed for ever.

3. How can it be said that a religious is devout? and how can he become so, if he prefer idle babbling before reading, study, and prayer?

He that takes pleasure in speaking or listening to frivolous things, barter his soul for a pitiful price.

In all temptation or tribulation, fly to prayer, as to your soul's harbour. The more readily you have recourse to it, the more will it be efficacious. The more you delay, the less advantage shall you obtain: the more frequent it be, the more profit will you draw from it: the more fervent it be, the more pleasing to God.

God, who is good and merciful, loves us to ask of him: he furnishes us with occasions for prayer, and he hath promised that we shall be heard; since he hath said "Ask and you shall receive." (Matt. 17:17.)

He invites us to prayer by his discourses,—leads us thither by his example,—constrains us by his threats, and encourages us by his favours. He punishes our negligence by adversity; rewards our submission by prosperity; and in this *morning* and *evening* of pains and consolations, is our *one day* of life accomplished. (Gen. 1)

Moreover, God often communicates to those who pray devoutly, who love retreat and silence, interior consolations, which he refuses to those who love the world and its idle conversation.

4. But ye who love good tidings, come and entertain you with Jesus Christ; listen to him as he speaks of the kingdom of God,—of the judgment to come,—of the Heavenly Jerusalem; of the happiness which the inhabitants of heaven, the orders and choirs of angels, enjoy; of the glory and honour of the elect, and of the recompense of the saints, who shall spend all eternity in joy and gladness.

Hearken to the prophets, as they unfold the hidden mysteries of Christ, and declare the chastisements which lower over the sinner.

Listen to the apostles and evangelists, as they publish abroad the wonderful works and miracles of Jesus Christ.

Listen to the doctors of the Church, as they speak with eloquent tongues of holy things, and explain what is obscure in the Scriptures; as they give bright colours to the life of virtue, and refute the vain reasoning of schism and heresy.

May each one of us choose in these instructions, the truths most suited to our taste or wants. Pass not over with disdain such as seem simple, and censure not those which are above your intellect; for it is folly to reprove the wise, but it is impiety to condemn the saints and men inspired of God.

5. Labour steadfastly then to learn the most simple truths, and humbly resolve to practise the least, however small; and if it be to thy advantage, God will give you soon the knowledge of higher mysteries.

It is written: "To him who knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin." (St. James 4:17.)

He that is stored with knowledge, and makes not use of it to regulate his conduct; and he that reads, but profits not by what he reads, are like those who go away empty and famished, from a table that is abundantly spread.

As he that works little, shall be long in want; so he that seldom prays, shall be long lukewarm.

He that discourses against vice, and corrects not his own, scatters good seed amongst thorns.

And little fruit will be gathered from many words, if one comes to prayer without first casting out his evil thoughts.

Happy is he that with earnest care, casts forth from his soul all impurity; and who suffers nothing to remain in the secret of his heart, that can wound the chaste regards of his heavenly spouse.

The humble confession of sin, proceeding from a heart truly contrite and lowly, is a sure means of cleansing it from vice.

6. The pious Christian finds pleasure in prayer; the studious man in his books; the devout soul, in the practice of virtue; the proud, in honours; the humble, in contempt: the rich, in his riches; the beg-

gar, in his alms; the glutton, in his eating and drinking; the idle in his frivolous talk: the sober man, in his temperance; the wise, in his wisdom; the good monk, in submission to his rule;—but none of these enjoyments are to be compared with those which flow from the love of God, and the peace of a good conscience.

Would you triumph over your most dangerous enemies? fly, speak little—be not angry—pray—fast—study—work—be diligent.

A holy man thinks holily, speaks truly, and acts justly; despises things present, and meditates on those that are eternal.

The humble man receives the advice that is given to him; the prudent man avoids danger; the patient suffers with resignation, and the diligent neglects not his occupation; and he that shuns not small faults, shall fall into great ones.

7. If one be lukewarm in the morning, he will rarely be found fervent at the close of the day.

He that springs from inaction to put himself promptly to work, feels an inward satisfaction, and if he be not honoured by men, shall be well pleasing in the sight of God, which is far better and infinitely more to be prized; for God giveth himself to the saints, to be their reward and the eternal recompense of their good works, their toil, and sufferings.

The idle man is never satisfied in his idleness, but the virtuous man denies himself even of things that are lawful.

He that is founded on humility, and counts as nothing the honours of this world, shall walk with an assured step in the way that is good.

That man lives and acts wisely, who, to please God alone, separates himself from the world to live retired; and who, full of contempt and disrelish for earthly goods, longs only for those of heaven, and ever places the love of God above all.

Day 3. Friday. February 28th, 2020.

Litany

Lent is not only a time of fasting but also of renewal. During your day today take some time to meditate on this litany of fasting and feasting and perhaps take something from it as your own discipline of renewal.

Fast from judging others; Feast on Christ dwelling in them.

Fast from apparent darkness; Feast on the reality of Light.

Fast from pessimism; Feast on optimism.

Fast from thoughts of illness; Feast on the healing power of God.

Fast from words that pollute; Feast on phrases that purify.

Fast from anger; Feast on patience.

Fast from worry; Feast on unceasing prayer.

Fast from complaining; Feast on appreciation.

Fast from hostility; Feast on non-resistance.

Fast from bitterness; Feast on forgiveness.

Fast from anxiety; Feast on hope.

Fast from yourself; Feast on a silent heart.

http://www.gloriadeihudson.org/documents/Fasting_and_Feasting.pdf

Contemplative Prayer

This is the ancient practice of opening our whole being – body, mind and spirit – to God's abiding presence. It is quiet but active, restful but attentive, intentional but not goal-oriented. It is making real in our experience God's love "poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 5:5). It requires patience. The fruit is often experienced outside of the practice itself. Just a physical exercise may be tough in the doing, and yet we carry the benefits with us through our day, so is contemplative (or centering) prayer. Have no goal in mind. It may feel like nothing has happened. Persevere. Showing up expresses a desire for God and He will respond. Silence is important. "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). There is a hearing and seeing beyond words as we open up our unconscious mind and the depth of our souls to God.

- " Plan initially for 15-20 minutes. (Set a timer and then forget about the clock).
- " Sit or kneel in a way that is neither too uncomfortable (distracts) or too comfortable (snoozy).
- " Be in a quiet space without distractions.
- " It may be helpful to have a 'sacred' object (cross, Bible, photo, icon, etc) in easy view. .

1. *Choose a 'sacred' word or phrase.*

- " In a short time of prayer ask the Holy Spirit to give you a sacred word or phrase.
- " Use one that readily comes to mind (don't search for a "perfect" one). E.g. "good shepherd", "grace", "comforter", "prince of peace", "forgiven", "with you always", "Lamb of God" "joy".

2. *Softly speak your sacred word or phrase and then be still.*

- " Dwell in God's presence.
- " Fellowship is presence not talk. (Like enjoying a view with a friend.)

3. *Abide. Let God's presence touch you.*

- " Let normal thoughts and feelings come. Don't try to 'empty' your mind, but don't let a particular thought take over.
- " Feel your soul letting go. (Do not go searching for thoughts or feelings.) Wait. Rest.
- " Let Jesus lift any weight off your soul – fear, frustration, disappointment, desire, sadness, loneliness, anger, . . . Give it over. (Do not analyze, rationalize or sentimentalize.)
- " Enjoy, don't strive. Let joy and peace in. Smile at good thoughts and feelings.
- " Let go of tightness in your face and body. Breathe rhythmically. Release your limbs. Let God's peace spread to your neck, shoulders, arms, back, legs, ...
- " If you doze, or your thoughts wander unhelpfully, return gently with your sacred word. (Don't use it repetitively like a mantra.)
- " If images crowd your mind look at your sacred object and slow your mind. Be attentive.
- " Experience gentleness. Receive grace. (Like enjoying a gentle breeze, or the warmth of a bath.)

4. *When the timer rings, end by thoughtfully praying the Lord's Prayer.*

Day 5. Monday. March 2nd, 2020.

Thomas à Kempis. (1840). *The Little Garden of Roses and Valley of Lilies* (pp. 79–88). London: T. Jones.

CHAP. XVII

On the imitation of the most holy life of our Lord Jesus Christ

“Quamdiu fecistis uni ex his fratribus meis minimis, mihi fecistis.” (St. Matth. 25:40.)

“As long as you did it to one of these, my least brethren, you did it to me.”

Note these words, weigh well the mysteries they contain, and let them be unto you as a rule of life.

He that comforts his brother in need, stretches out his hand to Jesus.

He that bears with patience the burthen which Providence has laid on him, carries on his shoulders Jesus, and him crucified.

He that addresses words of consolation to the afflicted, gives to Jesus a loving kiss.

He that mourns over the faults of his brother, and supplicates for his pardon, washes and wipes the feet of Jesus.

He that turns the anger of his brother to peace, prepares in his soul a bed of flowers for Jesus.

He that at table gives up to his brother the better portion set aside for him, feeds Jesus with the bread and honey of charity.

He that meditates with fervour on God, introduces Jesus into the secret chamber of his soul.

He that reads words of holy wisdom to his brother, offers choice wine to the lips of Jesus.

He that restrains frivolous conversation, drives away the flies from the table of Jesus.

He that will not hearken to detraction, and reproves unseemly conversation, arms himself with a staff to drive away a savage hound from the house of Jesus.

He that during refection reads to his brethren correctly and distinctly, serves up a heavenly cup to the guests of Jesus, and inebriates them with the wine of joy; but he that reads ill, takes away the relish of the food; and he that stammers stains the cloth which covers the table of Jesus.

He that hears his neighbour slandered, and feels therefrom much grief and deep sorrow, anoints with balm the sacred wounds of Jesus.

He that speaks of the good example and virtues of his neighbour, presents to Jesus a nosegay of fair flowers.

He that reads devoutly, and announces the words of Jesus, casts sweet perfume in the nostrils of those that hear him.

He that bears charitably with the faults of his neighbour, and gives them a favourable construction, shall readily obtain mercy from Jesus.

He that throws a veil over the vices or scandals of his neighbour, covers the naked limbs of Jesus.

He that meditates on the humble life and miracles of Jesus, and therewith sweetly nourishes his soul, drinks in milk and honey from the mouth of Jesus.

Thus spoke the blessed Agnes, who after experiencing it, had the happiness of shedding her blood for

the love of Jesus.

He that reads or sings in the place of his sick brother, sweetly plays on the harp with the angels before the cradle of Jesus.

He that prays devoutly, abstains from delicate meats, and renounces all, comes with the Magi kings to lay three costly offerings in the hands of the infant Jesus.

He that washes the feet of his brethren and does the meanest offices; with St. John the Baptist, baptizes Jesus.

He that lives in the solitude and silence of his cell, enters the desert with Jesus.

He that does violence to his inclinations, and chastises his body, fasts with Jesus.

He that speaks words of salvation to his brethren, preaches with Jesus of the kingdom of heaven.

He that prays constantly for such of his brethren as are weak or in temptation, visits Lazarus with Jesus, and weeps with Martha and Mary at his tomb.

He that offers the holy sacrifice of the mass, for the faithful departed, or recites the office for them, comes with Jesus to the tomb of Lazarus, to beg that his soul may be mercifully delivered from suffering.

He that goes to the common refectory with his brethren, to hear spiritual reading, eateth and drinketh with Jesus and his disciples.

He that lays up in his heart the words of God, which he has heard in the refectory, reposes with the Apostle St. John, during the supper, on the breast of Jesus.

He that submits humbly, and without delay, to do what is painful to him, follows Jesus with his disciples to the Mount of Olivet, where he was betrayed and delivered to his enemies.

He that has instant recourse to fervent prayer in tribulation or temptation, contends with Jesus in his agony, against the assaults of Satan.

He that renounces his own will entirely, fulfils the will of God the Father, with Jesus, and with courageous resignation carries his cross even to Calvary.

He that prays for his enemies, and willingly pardons those that have sinned against him, prays with Jesus that his enemies may not perish, but rather that they may be converted to God and live.

He that voluntarily renounces the things of this world, and casts aside the flattery of the senses, expires with Jesus on the cross; and his spirit, like that of the Apostle St. Paul, is rapt even to Paradise.

4. He that keeps his heart clean and peaceful, wraps up Jesus in fair white linen, and entombs him in his breast.

He that perseveres unto the end in the service of Jesus, sweetly reposes with him in peaceful slumber in the sepulchre.

He that weeps for the sorrows of the blessed Virgin Mary, deserves that she and her holy Son should console him in affliction.

He that in spirit recalls the words and actions of Jesus, and makes thereof a spiritual food, prepares sweet spikenard to soften the bitterness of his passion.

He that gives humble and devout thanks for the blessings he has received, comes with Mary Magdalen, bringing sweet perfume to the sepulchre of Jesus.

He that after contrition and confession of sins, firmly resolves to amend them, rises with Jesus from the death of sin.

He that casts aside his lukewarmness, and returns again to his first fervour, celebrates in spirit a new pasch, and sings with Him an hallelujah of joy.

He that despises the pleasures of the world, flies from its dangers, loves a religious life, and accepts its obligations, enters with Jesus into "the upper chamber," there to serve God in freedom and in secret, there to lead a life more pure, and to receive more abundantly the graces of the Holy Spirit.

He that is cold on earthly things, and is enflamed through holy meditation with such as are heavenly, leaves the earth with Jesus, and enters with Him into heaven.

Blessed is the soul in which "to live is Christ, and to die is gain," (Phil. 1:21,) for he that would live to Christ, must die to himself: and he that would be wise and happy in Christ, must renounce all perishable things.

Total separation from the things of this world, is painful, and death is grievous: but to reign in joy with Christ, is salvation and life eternal.

Oh! when shall the moment come when God shall be my all? when I shall be all for Him! when I shall be united to Him!

For ah! the faithful soul cannot be fully blessed, till it be united to God in glory.

Follow, then, Jesus in the steps of love, filled with a lively faith and a burning charity, that you may be worthy to see him face to face, there, where he is himself, the blessing and the joy of the angels.

To which beatific vision may Jesus Christ our Lord lead us: He who, for us, endured the bitter cross.
Amen.

“Repentance” | George Herbert

Lord, I confesse my sinne is great;
Great is my sinne. Oh! gently treat
With thy quick [flow'r](#), thy momentarie bloom;
Whose [life](#) still pressing
Is one undressing,
A steadie aiming at a tombe.

Mans age is two houres work, or three:
Each day doth round about us see.
Thus are we to delights: but we are all
To sorrows old,
If like be told
From what life feeleth, Adams fall.

O let thy height of mercie then
Compassionate short-breathed men.
Cut me not off for my most foul transgression:
I do confesse
My foolishnesse;
My God, accept of my confession.

Sweeten at length this bitter bowl,
Which thou hast pour'd into my soul;
Thy wormwood turn to health, windes to fair
weather:
For if thou stay,
I and this day,
As we did rise, we die together.

When thou for sinne rebukest man,
Forthwith he waxeth wo and wan:
Bitternesse fills our bowels; all our hearts
Pine, and decay,
And drop away,
And carrie with them th' other parts.

But thou wilt sinne and grief destroy;
That so the broken bones may joy,
And tune together in a well-set song,
Full of his praises,
Who dead men raises.
Fractures well cur'd make us more strong.

Reflection questions:

- *Does this poem change your view of repentance at all?*
- *Spend some time in private confession.*
- *Read the poem, particularly, the final stanza as a benediction.*



The Good Shepherd from the Catacomb of St Calixtus, Rome AD 225 - Fresco

He tends his flock like a shepherd:

*He gathers the lambs in his arms
and carries them close to his heart;*

he gently leads those that have young. - Isaiah 40:11

This image of Christ was not created solely out of imagination, rather as it was close to the time of Christ has some elements that are typical of the social context at the time. Notice the ram on his shoulders, the lack of a beard, no halo.

This fresco really depicts Christ as fully human.

- ◇ Take time to reflect on what it means for Christ to be fully God and yet fully human.
- ◇ What does this mean for your life and how you live?
- ◇ How is this an encouragement to you?

Day 8. Thursday. March 5th, 2020.

Bridges, J. (1983). *The Practice of Godliness* (pp. 100-107). Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress.

Jerry Bridges (1929 – 2016) was an evangelical author and speaker. Born in Texas, he was in the US Navy during the Korean war. He joined the Navigators in 1955 and held various roles during his lifetime. His best known book is *The Pursuit of Holiness*.

Thankfulness

*Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.
For the Lord is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.*

Psalm 100:4-5

Some virtues of Christian character, such as holiness, love, and faithfulness, are godly traits because they *reflect* the character of God. They are Godlike qualities. Other virtues are godly traits because they *acknowledge and exalt* the character of God. They are God-centered qualities that enhance our devotion to God. Such are the virtues of humility, contentment, and thankfulness. In humility we acknowledge God's majesty, in contentment His grace, and in thankfulness His goodness.

Thankfulness to God is a recognition that God in His goodness and faithfulness has provided for us and cared for us, both physically and spiritually. It is a recognition that we are totally dependent upon Him; that all that we are and have comes from God.

HONORING GOD

To fail to be thankful to God is a most grievous sin. When Paul recounts the tragic moral downfall of mankind in Romans 1, he begins with the statement, "Although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened." To glorify God is to acknowledge the majesty and dignity of His person. To thank God is to acknowledge the bountifulness of His hand in providing and caring for us. And when mankind in their pride failed to give God the glory and thanks due Him, God gave them up to ever-increasing immorality and wickedness. God's judgment came because man failed to honor Him and to thank Him. If failure to give thanks is such a grievous sin, then, it behooves us to cultivate a spirit of thankfulness that permeates our entire lives.

One of the most instructive passages on the subject of thankfulness is Luke 17:11-19, the account of the healing of the ten lepers. Here were ten men in the most pitiful of all human misery. Not only were they afflicted with a terrible and loathsome disease; they were outcasts from society because of their disease. They had no one to relieve either their physical or emotional suffering. And then Jesus healed them.

As these men went to show themselves to the priest and thus be restored to their families and friends, only one of them, realizing what had happened, turned back to give thanks to Jesus. Ten men were healed, but only one gave thanks. How prone we are to be like the other nine. We are anxious to receive but too careless to give thanks. We pray for God's intervention in our lives, then congratulate

ourselves rather than God for the results. When one of the American lunar missions was in serious trouble some years ago, the American people were asked to pray for the safe return of the astronauts. When they were safely back on earth, credit was given to the technological achievements and skill of the American space industry. No thanks or credit was publicly given to God. This is not unusual. It is the natural tendency of mankind.

In addition to instructing us about human nature, the account of the ten lepers also instructs us about God. Thanking Him for blessings we receive is very important to Him. Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?" Jesus was very much aware that only one returned to give Him thanks. And God is very much aware today when we fail to thank Him for the ordinary as well as the unusual blessings that come to us daily from His hand.

Even the angelic beings around God's throne give Him thanks. Revelation 4:9 speaks of their giving glory, honor, and thanks to Him who sits on the throne and who lives forever. God has created both angels and men to glorify Him and give Him thanks. When we fail to do this we fail to fulfill one of His purposes for us.

Thanksgiving is taught in the Bible by both precept and example. In 1 Chronicles, the Levites who took part in the temple worship were to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord. The Psalms contain some thirty-five references to giving thanks to God. In eighteen instances in his letters, Paul expresses thanksgiving to God, and there are ten other instances in which he instructs us to give thanks. In all, there are approximately 140 references in the Bible to giving thanks to God. Thankfulness is no minor principle in God's sight. It is absolutely necessary to the practice of godliness.

One incident from the life of Daniel shows us the importance that this man of God put on giving thanks. We all know the story of Daniel in the lions' den, but do we remember how he got there? King Darius was persuaded by certain officials who were jealous of Daniel's position to issue a decree that for thirty days, anyone who prayed to any god or man other than King Darius would be thrown into the lions' den. When Daniel knew that the decree had been published, he went to his room and three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.

Now if you and I prayed at *all* under those circumstances, we'd be pleading with God for His deliverance. No doubt Daniel did pray for deliverance; but he also gave thanks. Our situation is never so desperate that it is not fitting to give thanks to God. Paul teaches us this principle in Philippians 4:6 when he says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, *with thanksgiving*, present your requests to God."

When Paul wrote his letter to the Colossian Christians, he was seeking to deal with an infiltration of man-made philosophy and wisdom into their church. After declaring that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ, he urges the Colossians, "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness" (2:6-7). Paul is dealing with the fundamental issues of the Christian life, and he includes the concept of thanksgiving as one of those fundamental issues. He says we are to *overflow* with thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is a normal result of a vital union with Christ, and a direct measure of the extent to which we are experiencing the reality of that union in our daily lives.

Day 9. Friday. March 6th, 2020.

Song by Steve Bell

“Come to my help O God”

Psalm 70:1

Meditate and reflect on [Psalm 70:1 – Come to My Help O God](#) by Steve Bell. Listen to the song a couple of times leaving space in between to reflect and pray as the Lord leads you. This prayer is for every and any situation of life, whether it be joyful, stressful, challenging or difficult.

Come to my help, O God
Lord, hurry to my rescue
Come to my help, O God
Lord, hurry to my rescue
Come to my help, O God
Lord, hurry to my rescue
Come to my help, O God
Lord, hurry to my rescue

Take this song with you into the day as your prayer.

Day 10. Saturday. March 7th, 2020.

Contemplative Prayer

This is the ancient practice of opening our whole being – body, mind and spirit – to God's abiding presence. It is quiet but active, restful but attentive, intentional but not goal-oriented. It is making real in our experience God's love "poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 5:5). It requires patience. The fruit is often experienced outside of the practice itself. Just a physical exercise may be tough in the doing, and yet we carry the benefits with us through our day, so is contemplative (or centering) prayer. Have no goal in mind. It may feel like nothing has happened. Persevere. Showing up expresses a desire for God and He will respond. Silence is important. "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). There is a hearing and seeing beyond words as we open up our unconscious mind and the depth of our souls to God.

- “ Plan initially for 15-20 minutes. (Set a timer and then forget about the clock).
- “ Sit or kneel in a way that is neither too uncomfortable (distracts) or too comfortable (snoozy).
- “ Be in a quiet space without distractions.
- “ It may be helpful to have a 'sacred' object (cross, Bible, photo, icon, etc) in easy view. .

1. *Choose a 'sacred' word or phrase.*

- “ In a short time of prayer ask the Holy Spirit to give you a sacred word or phrase.
- “ Use one that readily comes to mind (don't search for a "perfect" one). E.g. "good shepherd", "grace", "comforter", "prince of peace", "forgiven", "with you always", "Lamb of God" "joy".

2. *Softly speak your sacred word or phrase and then be still.*

- “ Dwell in God's presence.
- “ Fellowship is presence not talk. (Like enjoying a view with a friend.)

3. *Abide. Let God's presence touch you.*

- “ Let normal thoughts and feelings come. Don't try to 'empty' your mind, but don't let a particular thought take over.
- “ Feel your soul letting go. (Do not go searching for thoughts or feelings.) Wait. Rest.
- “ Let Jesus lift any weight off your soul – fear, frustration, disappointment, desire, sadness, loneliness, anger, . . . Give it over. (Do not analyze, rationalize or sentimentalize.)
- “ Enjoy, don't strive. Let joy and peace in. Smile at good thoughts and feelings.
- “ Let go of tightness in your face and body. Breathe rhythmically. Release your limbs. Let God's peace spread to your neck, shoulders, arms, back, legs, ...
- “ If you doze, or your thoughts wander unhelpfully, return gently with your sacred word. (Don't use it repetitively like a mantra.)
- “ If images crowd your mind look at your sacred object and slow your mind. Be attentive.
- “ Experience gentleness. Receive grace. (Like enjoying a gentle breeze, or the warmth of a bath.)

4. *When the timer rings, end by thoughtfully praying the Lord's Prayer.*

Day 11. Monday. March 9th, 2020.

Bridges, J. (1983). *The practice of godliness* (pp. 100–107). Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress.

PURPOSES OF THANKSGIVING

The primary purpose of giving thanks to God is to acknowledge His goodness and honor Him. God says in Psalm 50:23, “He who sacrifices thank offerings honors me.” Psalm 106:1–2 says, “Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. Who can proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord or fully declare his praise?” When we give thanks to the Lord we proclaim His mighty acts; we acknowledge His goodness.

God is infinite in goodness to all His creatures. “He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous”; and “He has compassion on all he has made” (Matthew 5:45, Psalm 145:9).

He is most worthy of our praise and thanksgiving, especially if we are among His redeemed people, for He has blessed us not only in the temporal realm, but also with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 1:3).

Thanksgiving promotes not only the glory of God, but also humility in us. It is the tendency of the sinful human heart—even the regenerated heart—to usurp the credit that rightfully belongs only to God. On several occasions God warned the children of Israel against this tendency (see Deuteronomy 8:11–14, 8:17–18, and 9:4–7). In David’s prayer of thanksgiving for the gifts for the temple, he gratefully acknowledged that all of the abundance which the people brought came from and belonged to God. Paul constantly gave thanks to God for the spiritual progress of the churches under his care. He never took the credit for himself.

Thanksgiving also stimulates our faith. In Psalm 50:14–15, God connects thank offerings with calling upon Him in the day of trouble. Remembering God’s previous mercies encourages us to trust Him for mercies we need today. Perhaps this idea is included in Paul’s cure for anxiety in Philippians 4:6–7.

Finally, thanksgiving promotes contentment. Few things will stir up discontent within us as will our inner spiritual struggle between the sinful nature and the Holy Spirit. Its intensity caused Paul to cry out, “What a wretched man I am!” But then he finds relief and contentment in thanksgiving to God for the deliverance promised to us through Jesus Christ (Romans 7:24–25). Thanksgiving will also promote contentment about possessions, position, and providence by focusing our thoughts on the blessings God has already given, forcing us to stop spending our time yearning for things we do not have. Contentment and thanksgiving strengthen each other.

CULTIVATING A THANKFUL HEART

The foundation of an attitude of thankfulness is a life lived in fellowship with Christ. As Colossians 2:6–7 suggests, thankfulness is the overflow of being rooted and built up in Christ. As we abide in Him, as we see His power at work in us and through us, as we call upon Him for our needs and experience His provision, our response will be thanksgiving. Like any other trait of godly character, thankfulness is a result of the Holy Spirit’s ministry in our hearts. He gives us a thankful spirit, but He does this through our fellowship with Christ.

But though an attitude of thankfulness is the work of the Holy Spirit, it also comes as a result of personal effort on our part. We must cultivate the habit of always giving thanks for everything (Ephesians 5:20). One way we can do this is to expand our mealtime expression of thanks to include other blessings beyond the food before us. Another way is to begin and end the day with a time of thanksgiving. Psalm 92:1–2 says, “It is good to praise the Lord and make music to your name, O Most High, to proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night.” As we arise in the morning we can thank God for His love, which is assured to us throughout the day. As we retire we can thank

Him for specific demonstrations of His faithfulness during the day.

Another practical help is to write down the prayer requests you make to God; then keep those answered requests on your list until you feel you have adequately thanked God for His answer. Along with my written prayer requests, I also keep a list of significant blessings for which I am always thankful. I try to go over this list two or three times a week to express my thanks to God for His goodness to me. My thanksgiving list includes the following items:

- ❖ my personal salvation
- ❖ opportunities I have for spiritual growth
- ❖ the availability of the Bible
- ❖ the instruction and fellowship of our church
- ❖ the abundance of helpful Christian books
- ❖ opportunities for ministry and service
- ❖ godly parents
- ❖ a godly wife
- ❖ children who know Christ and are growing in Him
- ❖ health of our family
- ❖ political freedom
- ❖ material provision for family needs

Your personal thanksgiving list may not include all the items on my list, but it will likely include others. The important thing is to make such a list, and then use it. Set aside a period of time when you do nothing but thank God for the blessings on that list, as well as blessings more passing in nature.

Thanksgiving should also be included as a regular part of our intercessory prayer time. Paul seemed to always do this. He makes frequent statements in his letters such as, "We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you" (Colossians 1:3). Later in that letter he instructs the Colossians, "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful" (4:2). When we pray without giving thanks we impoverish our own souls and render our prayers ineffective.

Along with the practical steps for cultivating an attitude of thankfulness and a habit of giving thanks, we need to remember the place of the word of God and prayer in developing traits of godly character. An ungrateful heart (which all of ours are by nature) must be transformed by the renewal of the mind. This transformation is the work of the Holy Spirit as we fill our minds with the word of God. Again I encourage you to memorize key verses on thanksgiving, using some of the passages cited in this chapter or others of your choosing. As you meditate on these verses, ask God to give you a genuine attitude of thanksgiving so that you, too, may be found in the company of the one leper who returned to give God thanks.

Day 12. Tuesday. March 10th, 2020.

Jolene Nolte, born in the Desert of California and raised in the Plains of Colorado, was introduced to Keats' 'To Autumn' by her high school English teacher. It was her gateway drug into poetry. She studied literature and theology at Biola University, and is completing her MA in the Arts at Regent, where she has the privilege of studying and writing poems as part of her theological education. Jolene loves drinking coffee from her teal ceramic mug, going for long walks in Pacific Spirit Park or at Spanish Banks, and hanging out with friends and her niece and nephews. She is part of the Sojourn community.

“Without” | Jolene Nolte

Without a dishwasher, I submerge
one dish at a time: blue-rimmed
cereal bowl, ribbed teal mug, wide red
colander. Fragrant water warms
my hands, warms my core.

Without a car, I move,
memorizing shades of green, tempos
of rain, the way droplets bead
on palmate and pinnate edges. I slow
my steps to remain behind the dignified
woman in periwinkle, her hair
tightly spiraled, a silver rose.

Without drywall or electricity, I watch
smoke waft from campfire ring up past
darkened hemlocks until it vanishes
into sky pricked by distant
stars, dispersed as seed.

Without lover or child, I feel
walls within me dismantle, absence
throbbing like a pulsing web just here
where blood vessels, nerve endings, and grief's
radial threads interweave. What gift
lies in this, what gift held in this tender sieve?

Reflection questions:

- ♦ *While your circumstances may be different from the ones the poem describes, Lent is a season of going without. Are there ways your Lenten or otherwise voluntary without-ness makes room to receive something else?*
- ♦ *Are there any painful, unchosen absences you experience as grief? Bring those to mind and sit with God in your grief.*



Peter Walks on Water, Philipp Otto Runge, 1806, Oil on Canvas

This painting is rich in detail.

- ◆ Take time to examine the natural details, the wave that Jesus is standing on, the waves around the boat, the sky. What does this tell you about the situation?
- ◆ Examine the facial expressions and body language of Jesus and Peter. What do you see?
- ◆ If you look at the disciples in the boat, what are their expressions telling you?
- ◆ Spend some time thinking about these observations. How does this painting deepen the story for you and how can you apply those observations to your life?

Day 14. Thursday. March 12th, 2020.

Elliff, T. D. (1998). *A passion for prayer : experiencing deeper intimacy with God* (pp. 110-123). Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books.

Tom Elliff (b. 1944) is a third generation Southern Baptist Pastor. He worked as a missionary for many years and was President of the Southern Baptist missions organization the International Mission Board from 2011 – 2014.

WHEN YOU FINALLY GET ALONE WITH GOD

*Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled
with him until the breaking of day.*

GENESIS 32:24

WE EACH HAVE A JABBOK IN OUR FUTURE. I am not referring to the literal Middle East stream that bisects the Jordan River as it flows from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea. The Jabbok to which I am referring flows on every continent and in every life. Sooner or later each of us, like Jacob, will meet the Lord there and we can be forever changed.

For some our Jabbok may flow in the breathtaking beauty of a natural surrounding. But for most of us our Jabbok will flow through a place of quietness and peace, and there it will mingle with our tears. Whatever the setting, there is a Jabbok in your future.

Natural ability, diligently applied, can carry an individual to surprising heights in Christian circles. Hard work is so rare these days that it attracts and impresses others. People who are willing to settle down and do their job well often have the opportunity to advance into a position of leadership and status.

But God through His grace ultimately brings us face to face with our inadequacies. *He is determined to deal with spiritual emptiness whenever and wherever He finds it in our lives.* No matter how hard we try to hide it, the truth will come out. Like the famed Tower of Pisa, our seemingly well-ordered and successful lives will begin to lean embarrassingly if they are not properly founded.

Jacob's life is a perfect illustration of this truth. By cleverness he obtained his brother's birthright. In deceptive partnership with his mother he stole his brother's blessing. Then, running for his life, he spent a night at Bethel and vowed to God that he would not forget Him. He promised that one day he would return home and there erect an altar to God.

But what goes around comes around. At first it appeared that Jacob had met his match in the person of his surreptitious father-in-law. But again Jacob applied himself diligently and begged God for His blessing. God answered graciously, and Jacob began to prosper in cattle, wealth, and children. Jacob was a man with exceptional talent, a brilliant mind, a strong back, and a God-blessed future.

At the height of his glory, frustrated by his father-in-law, Jacob returned to his homeland. But instead of receiving a glorious welcome, he learned that his brother had gathered a small army and was seeking his life. Once again Jacob went to the well of his quick-wittedness that had so often been his ally. He sent flocks and herds of animals to appease his materialistic brother. He divided his extended family and their servants into two groups and sent them separate ways for their safety. Then in a final act of desperation he sent his remaining family members across the Jabbok. Exhausted, he slumped to the ground with the realization that he had reached into the bag of his own human ability and had pulled out his last trick.

Now under the silent stars a most unusual scene transpires: Jacob wrestles with a man. Through the night the patriarch struggles, with no success. He cannot rid himself of his adversary. Who is this man who has come against him?

The answer come in a surprising fashion. As they wrestle, the man brushes the hollow of Jacob's thigh with such might that his hip socket becomes dislocated. In awe at his opponent's incredible strength and power, reflecting on this most unusual battle, Jacob suddenly understands: the One against whom he has been wrestling all night is none other than the Lord Himself!

The wrestling match is a telling picture of Jacob's life. He has sought to achieve success with his cleverness and determination. "Supplanter," the meaning of "Jacob," was an appropriate name for one so driven by ambition. Suddenly seeing his own mortal shortcomings and how much he needed God's help, Jacob clings to the Lord and humbly but persistently asks for a blessing.

*Waiting's not the life that I would choose
For, if I wait, I'm confident that I would surely lose
The things I've dreamed about and hoped for and desired
The thrill of saying, "These are things I have acquired!"*

*No, waiting's not the life that's meant for me.
While others wait I'll move ahead and shortly they will see
The kind of man I am, my cleverness, my drive
Pursuing all my greatest dreams while still alive.*

*For waiting seems to be a waste of time.
How can the man who stops and waits
achieve those heights sublime
From which to view the lives of those who slowly plod
And only wish to see the places I'll have trod?*

*Ah, waiting is a sickness, don't you see?
Afflicting young and old alike, but not the likes of me
... except that, lately, every way I've turned is closed.
Perhaps the secret's not in pushing on as I'd supposed.*

*So what's the answer for my struggling soul?
I must confess I've just now seen it in the Book of old
Which says that all the gains and victories I've scored
Are empty, unless first I've waited on the Lord.*

*For those who wait on Him will find, at length,
An even greater vision and a sure supply of strength.
A mounting up to heights where only eagles soared
Is promised to us if, first, we wait upon the Lord.*

—T. ELLIFF

Jacob's life was never the same after that meeting with the Lord at Jabbok. Admitting his need and inadequacy, he prayed to God with desperation and persistence, and God granted His request with abundance. From that moment on Jacob began to realize the full significance of doing God's work God's way with God's power.

Every believer's life is marked by significant turning points, special meetings with God ordained to bring about radical change. Does your heart long for such meetings with the Lord? Have you come to the point where you know it is futile to press on without Him? There is a Jabbok in your future, and at the heart of such an experience is an honest, help-me-or-I'll-die prayer.

MEETING GOD: OUR CIRCUMSTANCES

Do any of the following describe us? If so, God is calling us to meet with Him.

Desperation

Jacob knew he was facing issues too big for him to handle. He recognized that he might lose everything—his family, his fortune, his future in the place where he had longed to spend the balance of his years. He stood to lose all that made his life worthwhile.

Is God calling us to Himself through desperate circumstances? Have we been forced against a wall of human weakness? Have we reached into the bag of our own cleverness and found it empty? Have we come to the point where it is difficult to make ourselves keep pushing on? This kind of desperation sometimes prepares us to meet with the Lord.

Destitution

Jacob was not without material resources at that moment. But he had exhausted the depths of his perseverance. I remember visiting with a man who confessed to being "spiritually broke." When I asked what he meant, he replied, "I have always been able to come up with some new idea to add excitement and the appearance of success to my life. Some new project would absorb my energy and attention. It always had to be something big, something great, something life-changing that would capture the attention and admiration of others. I was always looking for something that had in it the promise of greatness and notoriety."

He continued, "Lately nothing has created the slightest bit of interest in my heart. I have become aware that I am great with men but not with God. I have money in my pocket, but I'm spiritually broke!" God was calling him to his own Jabbok.

Dread

Fear obviously filled Jacob's heart. His actions demonstrated utter panic. A wrong turn at that moment would mean destruction. He might never see his family again. His fortune could be lost. All he had worked so hard to accumulate could be gone in a moment, a consequence of his own wrong decisions and actions years earlier. He did not want to think about his past, but he was even more afraid to consider his future (at least if Esau had anything to do with it).

I am acquainted with people (and so are you) who dread making any major decision because they fear they will make the wrong one. They feel as if any moment they might lose their family, their work, their ministry, or their faith. When you speak to them about the bright prospects of the future, they grimace. With pursed lips, a furrowed brow, and a pensive look, they inform you that things are not looking so well for them. For them, the day is never partly sunny but always partly cloudy; their cup is always half-empty, never half-full. These folks, paralyzed by fear, need to meet with the Lord.

Demand

Jacob was under pressure to decide what he should do. The clock was ticking. This was no time to tread water or run in place. His brother was dangerously close, and Jacob did not have another night, much less another day, to make his decision.

At deadline moments decisions must be made. Our failure to decide gives others the power to decide for us, sometimes with disastrous results. People in this situation often complain, "My life is out of control! I have no time of my own! My frantic pace scarcely gives me time to breathe!" In such a dilemma there is no time to waste. We must meet with God!

Interestingly, Jabbok meetings with the Lord often occur in the more mature stages of our spiritual pilgrimage, when the stakes are often the highest, there is more to lose, the pressure is greatest, and recovery from the devastating effects of an earlier wrong decision seems least likely. It is then that the rippling waters of Jabbok are heard most clearly and sought most desperately. God always hears and answers the honest prayers of those in such straits.

Day 15. Friday. March 13th, 2020.

Yet not I but Through Christ in Me

Meditate and reflect on [Yet Not I But Through Christ in Me](#) as sung by CityAlight. Listen to the song a couple of times leaving space in between to reflect and pray as the Lord leads you.

What gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer
There is no more for heaven now to give
He is my joy, my righteousness, and freedom
My steadfast love, my deep and boundless
peace

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus
For my life is wholly bound to His
Oh how strange and divine, I can sing: all is
mine!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

The night is dark but I am not forsaken
For by my side, the Saviour He will stay
I labour on in weakness and rejoicing
For in my need, His power is displayed

To this I hold, my Shepherd will defend me
Through the deepest valley He will lead
Oh the night has been won, and I shall
overcome!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

No fate I dread, I know I am forgiven
The future sure, the price it has been paid
For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon
And He was raised to overthrow the grave

To this I hold, my sin has been defeated
Jesus now and ever is my plea
Oh the chains are released, I can sing: I am
free!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

With every breath I long to follow Jesus
For He has said that He will bring me home
And day by day I know He will renew me
Until I stand with joy before the throne

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus
All the glory evermore to Him
When the race is complete, still my lips
shall repeat
Yet not I, but through Christ in me!

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus
All the glory evermore to Him
When the race is complete, still my lips shall
repeat
Yet not I, but through Christ in me!

When the race is complete, still my lips shall
repeat
Yet not I, but through Christ in me!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me!

(Music by CityAlight)

*End by using this song as part of your prayer
and consider these words throughout your
day.*

Day 16. Saturday. March 14th, 2020.

Contemplative Prayer

This is the ancient practice of opening our whole being – body, mind and spirit – to God's abiding presence. It is quiet but active, restful but attentive, intentional but not goal-oriented. It is making real in our experience God's love "poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 5:5). It requires patience. The fruit is often experienced outside of the practice itself. Just a physical exercise may be tough in the doing, and yet we carry the benefits with us through our day, so is contemplative (or centering) prayer. Have no goal in mind. It may feel like nothing has happened. Persevere. Showing up expresses a desire for God and He will respond. Silence is important. "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). There is a hearing and seeing beyond words as we open up our unconscious mind and the depth of our souls to God.

- “ Plan initially for 15-20 minutes. (Set a timer and then forget about the clock).
- “ Sit or kneel in a way that is neither too uncomfortable (distracts) or too comfortable (snoozy).
- “ Be in a quiet space without distractions.
- “ It may be helpful to have a 'sacred' object (cross, Bible, photo, icon, etc) in easy view. .

1. *Choose a 'sacred' word or phrase.*

- “ In a short time of prayer ask the Holy Spirit to give you a sacred word or phrase.
- “ Use one that readily comes to mind (don't search for a "perfect" one). E.g. "good shepherd", "grace", "comforter", "prince of peace", "forgiven", "with you always", "Lamb of God" "joy".

2. *Softly speak your sacred word or phrase and then be still.*

- “ Dwell in God's presence.
- “ Fellowship is presence not talk. (Like enjoying a view with a friend.)

3. *Abide. Let God's presence touch you.*

- “ Let normal thoughts and feelings come. Don't try to 'empty' your mind, but don't let a particular thought take over.
- “ Feel your soul letting go. (Do not go searching for thoughts or feelings.) Wait. Rest.
- “ Let Jesus lift any weight off your soul – fear, frustration, disappointment, desire, sadness, loneliness, anger, . . . Give it over. (Do not analyze, rationalize or sentimentalize.)
- “ Enjoy, don't strive. Let joy and peace in. Smile at good thoughts and feelings.
- “ Let go of tightness in your face and body. Breathe rhythmically. Release your limbs. Let God's peace spread to your neck, shoulders, arms, back, legs, ...
- “ If you doze, or your thoughts wander unhelpfully, return gently with your sacred word. (Don't use it repetitively like a mantra.)
- “ If images crowd your mind look at your sacred object and slow your mind. Be attentive.
- “ Experience gentleness. Receive grace. (Like enjoying a gentle breeze, or the warmth of a bath.)

4. *When the timer rings, end by thoughtfully praying the Lord's Prayer.*

Day 17. Monday. March 16th, 2020.

Elliff, T. D. (1998). *A passion for prayer : experiencing deeper intimacy with God* (pp. 110-123). Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books.

MEETING GOD: OUR CONDUCT

Over the years I have developed an appreciation for the biographies of great Christians. Inevitably as I begin reading, I ask myself, "What is this person's secret?" I want to know what distinguishes this individual's walk with God from that of others. Often I am surprised with just how much these individuals have in common, especially in their special meetings with God. Their Jabboks are quite similar to Jacob's. Three characteristics particularly stand out.

Resistance

"Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day" (Gen. 32:24). Jacob resisted the control of his opponent, doing all he could to insure that the man with whom he wrestled did not gain mastery over him. If only Jacob had known the true identity of the One he considered his adversary!

Our meetings with the Lord generally begin with similar resistance. Though in our minds we understand that the Lord knows best, in our heart we rebel against His control. Wanting things our way, we are determined to prove that we are capable of managing our own lives.

The Lord could literally have crushed Jacob at any moment. But He is not interested in mastering our lives by force. Occasionally, as in the case of Jacob, He will brush against our lives in such a way that we sense the magnitude of His power. But He does not manipulate us into allegiance.

God desires our willing surrender! Have we given everything to Him? This surrender involves ambitions, position, family, friends—everything! Our first response is often resistance, but He deserves all that we are and have. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies [that is, your entire selves] a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1).

Revelation

"And when He [the Lord] saw that He did not prevail against him [Jacob], He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him" (Gen. 32:25). In this momentary brush with the power of the Lord, Jacob suddenly understood whom he was resisting, and at that point the struggle assumed a totally different nature. Having seen God (undoubtedly the pre-incarnate Christ), Jacob was remarkably changed and had no desire to let Him go. And his life turned a corner because of this encounter!

Our Lord promised that "the pure in heart" will "see God" (Matt. 5:8). In our spiritual struggles it is often only when we come to a position of urgent abandonment that we "see" the Lord. A friend of mine once stated that desperation generally precedes revelation. Jacob would agree!

Request

When Jacob understood that his fellow wrestler was the Lord, he realized what utter folly it was to resist Him. He also refused to allow the meeting to pass without making two specific requests.

First, *he sought the blessing of the Lord*. "I will not let You go unless You bless me" (Gen. 32:26). As we saw earlier, God's blessing is a sovereign act by which He causes someone or something to super-

naturally produce more than is naturally possible. How deeply do we want God to bless us? How hungry are we for His working within us and through us? Is this a matter of casual prayer or earnest entreaty?

Many Bible passages encourage us to pray with perseverance, to “pray and not lose heart” (Luke 18:1). We sometimes get discouraged and stop praying when God’s answer does not come quickly enough. Instead, we should persist and hang on until God blesses us. We need more men and women of God who, like Epaphras, are “always wrestling in prayer” (Col. 4:12), determined to keep praying unless God directs us to stop or pray differently.

Jacob also had a second request: “*Tell me Your name, I pray*” (Gen. 32:29). In Old and New Testament times, an individual’s name stood for all that he was as a person. Jacob was saying, “I want to know who You are and what You are like—I want to know You!” Having the blessing of God on your life is one thing; knowing God is another.

Similarly, when Moses pled for Israel on Mount Sinai, his request was for more than protection, direction, or sustenance. “If Your presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. For how then will it be known that your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us?” (Exod. 33:13). Moses considered knowing the Lord to be absolutely essential.

Paul echoed this emphasis when he declared that his life’s magnificent obsession was to “know” Christ (Phil. 3:10). Similarly, as a result of Jabbok, Jacob’s great desire was to enjoy a walk of unhindered fellowship with the Lord. When we have our own Jabbok, every other desire will seem insignificant in our quest to know Him.

MEETING GOD: THE CONSEQUENCES

Some years ago I heard a seminary professor remark, “A person may be religious and lost, but he cannot meet Christ without being changed.” Anyone who has an encounter with the Lord, at whatever stage of his spiritual pilgrimage, will be genuinely changed in several specific ways.

A New Description

Jacob was given a new name as a result of meeting the Lord. “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed” (Gen. 32:28). Just as the different names of God reveal different aspects of His personality, so Jacob’s new name revealed something about his new nature. As Abram had become Abraham, and as Saul the persecutor would become Paul the apostle, so Jacob the supplanter became Israel the prince.

When we meet with God, our lives will manifest a difference. A drunkard, implicated in the killing of a man in a barroom brawl, was punished by having the dead man’s initials, G.M., tattooed on his forehead. In later years he was converted to Christ and subsequently became characterized by a humble life of total surrender to God. One day two young boys were discussing the meaning of the initials on his forehead. “I’m not sure what they mean,” said one of the boys, “but my daddy says he thinks they stand for God’s Man!”

You may be discouraged about how you are seen by others these days. Perhaps you have been misunderstood because of past or present events over which you had or have no control. Or perhaps your reputation was sullied by deliberate sin and failure. No matter! Go to Jabbok, meet with the Lord, and as you pray to and commune with Him, He will impress upon your life a new name.

A New Direction

Jacob now began to carry out God’s will for his life in a new way. That God had a plan for him had

never been in question. God had revealed that fact to his parents, and Jacob had sensed it in the earliest years of his development. But how was Jacob to carry out that plan? Until Jabbok, he had sought to achieve God's favor and blessing through his own skill and cleverness. He was determined not to be denied anything he desired. But now, as Israel, he saw that *God's plan must be accomplished by God's power*.

Our meeting with God can be as transforming as Jacob's. Perhaps, like Jacob, we have never doubted that God has a wonderful plan for our lives. Maybe we have even sought to cooperate with Him in achieving the goals we have set. We may have agreed with Him on the crucial issues of our lives. But somewhere along the way we began to depend on our own cleverness and drive. Bold, passionate prayer in a direct encounter with God can change everything! At our Jabbok we can receive God's direction and enabling, then forge forward with His power!

A New Devotion

From that time on, Jacob viewed God differently than before. In fact, Jacob named the place where he wrestled with the Lord Peniel, "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved" (Gen. 32:30). He now realized that the Lord held sway over life and death and over every corner of his existence and service.

Jacob did not become perfect at Jabbok. Even after that remarkable encounter, he sometimes acted more like a Jacob, at other times more like an Israel. (Simon Peter had a similar experience.) But there was clearly a new devotion in Jacob's life as evidenced by the erection of an altar to the God of Israel.

It must also be noted that Jacob's new identity, direction, and devotion did *not* release him from all the consequences of his past activities. His sons, for instance, had seen too much of the old Jacob. Once back in Canaan, they gave themselves to so much sin that God had to take them (and their descendants) to Egypt for a 400-year period of discipline and training. Nevertheless, God honored Jacob's devotion and fulfilled His plan through his children.

A certain quiet holiness characterizes the lives of those who have been to the Jabbok. They have erected altars in their hearts. To visit with them is to be drawn into an experience of worship. They walk on holy ground. They have a renewed devotion to the gracious God they serve.

A New Distinction

Jacob bore a physical reminder of his meeting with the Lord: "Just as he crossed over Peniel, the sun rose on him, and he limped on his leg" (Gen. 32:31). Jacob was marked by his meeting with the Lord. His lame limb became to him what Paul's "marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. 6:17) were to him—reminders of God's ownership.

People who have met the Lord and surrendered to Him are marked for life. A seminary student once told me that following his conversion he had a hard time forgetting the dirty jokes he loved to tell before getting saved. But he went on to explain, "I find it difficult to repeat those jokes to others now, even though I can remember them." Later on, after a Jabbok experience with the Lord, he reported, "You know, the strangest thing has happened. There was a time when I could remember certain jokes but felt ashamed to tell them. Now I find it difficult, impossible in fact, even to remember them." Meeting the Lord and surrendering to Him makes a radical difference in a man's life. It is a turning point without equal.

IN CONCLUSION

Before he died, Jacob came face to face once again with his son Joseph, whom he thought had been

killed. This time the reunion occurred, not in Canaan, but in Egypt where Joseph had risen to power. There Jacob's entire family enjoyed Egypt's provisions during a time of severe famine.

Picture Jacob as an old man, with grandchildren and great-grandchildren gathered around him as he limps over to a chair or couch. "Tell us the story," the children beg him, "about the wrestling match that made your leg the way it is." Settling himself comfortably, Jacob says, "Well, this happened because I wrestled with the Lord. You see ..."

Listen! Can you hear the waters of your Jabbok off in the distance? If so, then run to your meeting with the Lord! It will be the most incredible prayer experience of your life! And you will never be the same again!

Four Quartets, “Little Gidding,” IV | T.S. Eliot

The dove descending breaks the air
With flame of incandescent terror
Of which the tongues declare
The one discharge from sin and error.
The only hope, or else despair
Lies in the choice of pyre or pyre—
To be redeemed from fire by fire.

Who then devised the torment? Love.
Love is the unfamiliar Name
Behind the hands that wove
The intolerable shirt of flame
Which human power cannot remove.
We only live, only suspire
Consumed by either fire or fire.

Reflection questions:

- ◇ *What might it mean to be “redeemed from fire by fire?” How might Love’s fire be different from the alternative?*
- ◇ *This poem, and Lent, is unflinchingly unsentimental. They confront us with our mortality. Whether we surrender to God or not we will be consumed. Love’s pyre leads to life through death, and the other simply ends in ash. How might that choice affect how you view your life?*

Day 19. Wednesday. March 0th, 2020.



Enclosed Wheat Field, Vincent Van Gogh, Oil on Canvas

Take time to read the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13:1-23.

Day 20. Thursday. March 19th, 2020.

Moreland, J. P., & Issler, K. (2006). *The Lost Virtue of Happiness: Discovering the Disciplines of the Good Life* (pp. 23–34). Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.

J.P. Moreland (b. 1948) is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Biola University. He is a well known Christian apologist and speaker, particularly on university campuses. He did his doctoral studies under Dallas Willard, author of *The Divine Conspiracy*.

Klaus Issler is also a professor at Biola University. He is in the Talbot School of Theology and teaches on spiritual formation and discipleship.

GENUINE HAPPINESS AND HOW TO GET IT

According to the historical record of Jesus' deeds and teachings, there was one incident in His adult life that may have been a turning point, a climax in His public activities, second only to His execution, resurrection, and ascension. This incident occurred at a time when Jesus made clear to those to whom He would entrust His mission exactly who He was and what lay before Him.

Of paramount importance for raising children, being a good father or mother, learning to be a good boss or employee, or simply flourishing as a human, is Jesus' selection of topics to address immediately after making His identity clear. Clearly, the timing of what He taught indicates how central the teaching itself is. Here are His own words:

"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:24–26, NASB)

It is critically important to grasp the core of what Jesus is saying. A mistake at this point could lead—no, has led many—to adopt a life strategy that has harmed them greatly. For example, people have taken Jesus to be affirming the idea of justification by works or a gruesome form of self-hatred. In context, Jesus is actually expressing a crucial insight about the nature of the gospel He brought. That gospel is often confused with being merely what some call "a gospel of sin management." This gospel is the message of justification by faith: that by being murdered on the cross, Jesus paid the penalty for our sins, that His righteousness is credited to those who trust what He did for them, and that in this act they cease to be separated from God and are, instead, headed for heaven when they die. The message of forgiveness of sins is a treasure in itself, an absolutely central part of the gospel, the emotional and spiritual impact of which was wonderfully captured by Mel Gibson's movie *The Passion of the Christ*.

While forgiveness is an important part of the gospel, the good news goes beyond that. It amounts to the claim that the kingdom of God—the direct availability of God himself and His rule—is now available to anyone who will enter it through trust in Jesus. And such an entrance provides the believer with the power and resources to learn how to live a radically new kind of life from above—approximating the life Jesus himself lived, a life that radically and progressively manifests the fruit of God's Spirit (see Galatians 5:22–23). The gospel is an invitation to new life in the kingdom, lived from the power of the indwelling Spirit and the resurrection power of Jesus himself. Properly understood, it is an invitation to a life of happiness obtained in a very specific way.

Here we must examine the classical understanding of happiness proclaimed by Moses, Solomon, Jesus, Aristotle, Plato, the church fathers and medieval theologians, and many more—the understanding that has recently been replaced by "pleasurable satisfaction." According to the ancients, happi-

ness is *a life well lived, a life of virtue and character, a life that manifests wisdom, kindness, and goodness*. For them, the life of happiness—the life to dream and fantasize about, to hunger and seek after, to imitate and practice—is a life of virtue and character. At its core, such a life includes a very deep sense of well-being. But this sense should not be confused with pleasurable satisfaction. The following chart may help clarify the difference.

CONTRASTING VIEWS OF HAPPINESS	
<i>Contemporary Happiness:</i>	<i>Classical Happiness:</i>
Pleasurable satisfaction	Virtue and well-being
1. An intense feeling	1. A settled tone
2. Dependent on external circumstances	2. Springs from within
3. Transitory and fleeting	3. More permanent and stable
4. Addictive and enslaving	4. Empowering and liberating
5. Split off from rest of self, doesn't color rest of life, creates false/empty self	5. Integrated with entire personality, colors everything else, creates true self
6. <i>Strategy:</i> Achieved by self-absorbed narcissism	6. <i>Strategy:</i> Achieved by self-denying apprenticeship to Jesus
<i>Outcome:</i> Success produces a celebrity	<i>Outcome:</i> Success produces a hero

happiness, and the final row compares two diametrically opposed strategies for obtaining happiness—along with two very different results of those strategies. Let's begin by examining these characteristics.

An intense feeling is a vivid state. Rage, exuberance, and horror are intense feelings, as is pleasurable satisfaction. A settled tone, such as having a sense of being a wise or kind person, does have a felt texture to it, but it is subtler than an intense feeling. A settled tone is more like soft background music, which is not the direct object of one's awareness but rather the thing that creates an overall mood or texture. For instance, when at a restaurant, a man may be focusing his attention on his wife's statements and not on the background music. Still, that music can set the tone for the entire evening. When a person has an intense feeling, it is the focus of his attention. By contrast, if a person has a feeling that feels like a settled tone, it is subtler than an intense feeling, but, like background music, the feeling can set the tone for one's life.

Pleasurable satisfaction is heavily dependent on external circumstances (for example, performing well in a game or even at church, or enjoying a movie). As such, it is relatively unstable and comes and goes with the flux of a person's circumstances. Classical virtue springs from within as a process of maturation shapes internal character. Classical happiness becomes increasingly stable, permanent, and tied to a life of goodness, truth, beauty, and discipleship. It has less and less to do with external circumstances.

Like Turkish Delight in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, contemporary happiness becomes addictive and enslaving if it is central to the sense of self. Such an overemphasis creates a person who cannot live without “happiness,” who lives an adrenalized life, whose empty self must constantly be filled with calories, romance, consumer goods, and social status. In this way, “happiness” becomes addictive and enslaving. Satisfaction of desire and the right to do what he or she wants are the goal of life. Classical happiness is deeply liberating to such a person, as he or she increasingly becomes a unified person who lives for a cause larger than self. Advancing the kingdom of God, living in intimacy with God and others, and honoring God by reflecting His good nature are the goals of life. People with these goals seek the power to live as they ought and are not preoccupied with the right to do what they want.

People who consume large chunks of “happiness” can live strangely compartmentalized lives. A pocket of happiness in their mind can be entirely split off from the rest of their life. For example, a sports fan can get a bit of “happiness” by watching a game, but after it wears off, the impact of being “happy” does not necessarily make him or her satisfied with marriage or work. By contrast, a life of virtue and its deep sense of well-being colors everything, because it forms the core of the self and becomes the integrative center around which all aspects of his or her life are unified.

The difference between the two senses of happiness should be clear. However, for the Christian the question arises: Is classical happiness really what Jesus is talking about in Matthew 16:24–26 (the passage we looked at earlier)? I believe it is, and that Jesus and other New Testament writers give it a distinctive texture. Jesus is not talking about going to heaven and not hell, nor is He teaching His followers how to avoid a premature death. Matthew included this line: “What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?” (verse 26, NASB). Luke clarified Jesus’ meaning of *soul* by simply using the word *himself*. The idea is finding self versus losing self. More specifically, to find your self is to find out what life should look like and to learn to live that way. It is to become like Jesus himself and have a character that manifests the radical nature of the kingdom of God and the fruit of the Spirit. It is to find out God’s purposes for your life and to fulfill those purposes in a Christ-honoring way.

Remember, the concept of eternal life in the New Testament is not primarily one of living forever in heaven, but of having a new *kind* of life now. This new kind of life is so different that those without it can be called dead, truly. This is a life of human flourishing; a life lived the way we were made to function; a life of virtue, character, and well-being lived like and for the Lord Jesus.

This is what people hunger for, whether they know it or not. We are created for drama. We are meant to live dramatic lives as part of a worldwide movement—a divine conspiracy to trample the forces of darkness and replace them with goodness, truth, and beauty. Such a dramatic calling makes the presence or absence of a fleeting amount of pleasurable satisfaction simply beside the point and, frankly, not worth worrying about. We love movies that feature drama because that is how our own lives should be lived. We are to be dramatic even in the “little” things that grace the daily routines of our “ordinary” lives. As part of a pursuit of classical happiness, little things and ordinary activities become big and extraordinary pretty quickly.

No wonder people who are preoccupied with pleasurable happiness become empty selves. Their vision is too small, too confining, too mundane to justify their fourscore and ten, too little to demand their best effort over the long haul. Given the emptiness of such a perspective, when the gospel breaks into their hearts, it is no wonder people would rather spend themselves for an important cause—specifically, the cause of Christ and leading a life well lived—than enjoy a pampered idleness. They are weary of being flatlined by pleasure seeking. No wonder the primary problem of contemporary culture is boredom.

In this passage in Matthew, self-denial does not mean living without money, goods, recognition, or pleasurable satisfaction, though it certainly implies that having these things should not be your life objective. Neither is self-denial the attitude of putting yourself down. I sometimes meet people who cannot take a compliment. Or they feel guilty because they receive satisfaction from an achievement or from driving a new car or from some other earthly pleasure. Later we will correct this confusion about biblical happiness. For now, we note that Jesus uses taking up a cross to characterize self-denial. Luke added the word *daily* to the admonition (9:23), so it is apparent Jesus did not mean this literally, for we cannot die on a cross every day (though a willingness to die is clearly implied). Taking up our cross daily means to form the habit of going through our day with a certain orientation and attitude, namely, with a passion to give up our right to make ourselves the center of concern that day. Rather we live for God's kingdom, finding our place in His unfolding plan and playing our role well as we give our life away to others for Christ's sake.

The final row in the previous chart presents two very different approaches to life, producing two radically different types of people. It is here that the two understandings grab us by the nape of the neck, shake us to the core, and demand we make a choice of lifestyle strategies. This choice is as important as any we will ever make. And that is not religious hype—it is the sober truth.

If pleasurable satisfaction is our goal, then day by day, from morning to night, we will be looking inside ourselves, constantly taking our own happiness temperature. Our activities (job, recreation, church involvement) and other people (friends, spouse, children, and even God) will be mere things, mere objects that simply exist as means to our own happiness. If we become self-absorbed, we often will withdraw from people. Of course, solitude for the right reasons is crucial. We seek solitude in part so that we may reenter relationships with solid boundaries and emotional/spiritual refreshment. But if our pursuit is self-centered, we will resist and perhaps even attack others. We will look for safety that keeps us from having to change. If we are outgoing, on the other hand, we might talk all the time in social situations and not develop the skills of a good listener. And if we do know how to listen to others, it will be a front to earn the right to turn the conversation back to us at the earliest opportunity. After several years of this sort of life, we will become empty narcissists. This sounds harsh, but it is the truth—it's too important for sugarcoating.

If character and deep well-being is our goal, we will learn to see ourselves in light of a larger cause: the outworking of God's plan in history. We will be preoccupied with finding our role in that cause and playing it well. Our passion will be to see all of life's activities as occasions to draw near to—and become like—the triune God. We will hunger to become the kind of person who skillfully makes those around us better at living their lives as well. Our long-term focus will be on giving ourselves away to others for Christ's sake.

If we want to become people who flourish in life, with a deep sense of well-being, we must learn to give our lives away. As secular scholar John W. Gardner acknowledges, "Existence is a strange bargain. Life owes us little; we owe it everything. The only true happiness comes from squandering ourselves for a purpose." As followers of Jesus, if we want to flourish as persons, we must give ourselves away for Christ's sake.

At this point, we need to correct some potential misunderstandings:

Are you saying that pleasurable satisfaction is bad? Absolutely not! We are saying three things. First, pleasurable satisfaction is a good thing, but there are other types of satisfaction that are more important (for example, becoming a wise, kind person). Second, in general, pleasurable satisfaction is a poor long-term goal, but an excellent by-product of the correct life goal (becoming like Jesus). Think about it. The paradox of contemporary happiness is that the more we try to get it, the less of it we have. The best way to be happy in the contemporary sense is to basically forget about it and focus

on living for Christ and becoming a good person. We will gain more pleasure doing that than we will if we make pleasure itself a long-term goal. Third, pleasurable satisfaction is an appropriate short-term goal. We all need times when we watch television, go to a movie, take a vacation, and so forth. In these regular activities, we should, indeed, make our aim that of being happy. That's because happiness is a very good thing; it's just not important enough to justify our life on this earth.

Are you saying that I need to be harsh with myself and learn to get rid of self-love, that I need to be a doormat that simply serves others with no thought to my own well-being? Absolutely not! For one thing, to become like Christ we need to be disciplined but not self-loathing. We need to learn to be gentle with ourselves so we have what it takes to travel this road for the duration of life. To be gentle with something, we need to see it as simultaneously precious and vulnerable. This is why we are gentle with puppies. To be gentle with ourselves, we need to see ourselves as precious persons who are vulnerable and needy.

For example, if we are going through a time of serious anxiety and depression, though while we still seek to focus on others as best we can, it is also a time for us to be extremely gentle with ourselves and do what it takes to get well. And whether or not we are going through deep waters, we can lead a skillfully lived life only if we can draw appropriate boundaries and not let ourselves be inappropriately used over the long haul. Of course, there may be times when we allow someone to use us, but those times are appropriate only if they include wisely chosen boundaries that we freely draw.

Do I need to hide my problems from others to gain virtue and well-being so my issues don't get in the way? Again, absolutely not! A lifestyle of hiding from others is not a virtuous life. It deeply hinders the maturation process. As Henri Nouwen reminds us, "Laying down your life means making your own faith and doubt, hope and despair, joy and sadness, courage and fear available to others as ways of getting in touch with the Lord of life."

Jesus' teaching is not bad news—it's the very nectar of life. If we are dominated by the quest for pleasurable satisfaction, we will not experience a flourishing life. But if we learn to give our life away for Christ's sake, we will find pleasurable satisfaction as well—but we will not be discouraged if it comes and goes. We will have bigger fish to fry.

Still, a major problem continues to plague our discussion: How do we learn to deny ourselves for Jesus' sake? We'll tackle that question in the next chapter.

Kyrie

Meditate and reflect on [Kyrie 1](#) as sung by Fernando Ortega. Listen to the song a couple of times leaving space in between to reflect and pray as the Lord leads you.

○ Lord have mercy
○ Lord have mercy
○ Lord have mercy

○ Christ have mercy
○ Christ have mercy
○ Christ have mercy

○ Lord have mercy
○ Lord have mercy
○ Lord have mercy

(music by Ferndando Ortega)

End by using this song as part of your prayer and consider these words throughout your day.

Contemplative Prayer

This is the ancient practice of opening our whole being – body, mind and spirit – to God’s abiding presence. It is quiet but active, restful but attentive, intentional but not goal-oriented. It is making real in our experience God’s love “poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 5:5). It requires patience. The fruit is often experienced outside of the practice itself. Just a physical exercise may be tough in the doing, and yet we carry the benefits with us through our day, so is contemplative (or centering) prayer. Have no goal in mind. It may feel like nothing has happened. Persevere. Showing up expresses a desire for God and He will respond. Silence is important. “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). There is a hearing and seeing beyond words as we open up our unconscious mind and the depth of our souls to God.

- “ Plan initially for 15-20 minutes. (Set a timer and then forget about the clock).
- “ Sit or kneel in a way that is neither too uncomfortable (distracts) or too comfortable (snoozy).
- “ Be in a quiet space without distractions.
- “ It may be helpful to have a ‘sacred’ object (cross, Bible, photo, icon, etc) in easy view. .

1. *Choose a ‘sacred’ word or phrase.*

- “ In a short time of prayer ask the Holy Spirit to give you a sacred word or phrase.
- “ Use one that readily comes to mind (don’t search for a “perfect” one). E.g. “good shepherd”, “grace”, “comforter”, “prince of peace”, “forgiven”, “with you always”, “Lamb of God” “joy”.

2. *Softly speak your sacred word or phrase and then be still.*

- “ Dwell in God’s presence.
- “ Fellowship is presence not talk. (Like enjoying a view with a friend.)

3. *Abide. Let God’s presence touch you.*

- “ Let normal thoughts and feelings come. Don’t try to ‘empty’ your mind, but don’t let a particular thought take over.
- “ Feel your soul letting go. (Do not go searching for thoughts or feelings.) Wait. Rest.
- “ Let Jesus lift any weight off your soul – fear, frustration, disappointment, desire, sadness, loneliness, anger, . . . Give it over. (Do not analyze, rationalize or sentimentalize.)
- “ Enjoy, don’t strive. Let joy and peace in. Smile at good thoughts and feelings.
- “ Let go of tightness in your face and body. Breathe rhythmically. Release your limbs. Let God’s peace spread to your neck, shoulders, arms, back, legs, ...
- “ If you doze, or your thoughts wander unhelpfully, return gently with your sacred word. (Don’t use it repetitively like a mantra.)
- “ If images crowd your mind look at your sacred object and slow your mind. Be attentive.
- “ Experience gentleness. Receive grace. (Like enjoying a gentle breeze, or the warmth of a bath.)

4. *When the timer rings, end by thoughtfully praying the Lord’s Prayer.*

Day 23. Monday. March 23rd, 2020.

Moreland, J. P., & Issler, K. (2006). *The Lost Virtue of Happiness: Discovering the Disciplines of the Good Life* (pp. 41–47). Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES, SELF-DENIAL, AND GETTING GOOD AT LIFE

A number of New Testament texts seem a bit odd at first glance. It's hard to know how to take them if we do the right thing and interpret them literally. However, they are crucial to our aim of getting good at life. Please examine the following passages with me, especially the words I have italicized:

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your *bodies* a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. (Romans 12:1, NASB)

Romans 12:1 is unpacked earlier in Paul's letter as follows:

Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting *the members of your body* to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and *your members* as instruments of righteousness to God.... I am speaking in human terms because of *the weakness of your flesh*. For just as you *presented your members* as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now *present your members* as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification. (Romans 6:11–13, 19, NASB)

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. Everyone who competes in the games *exercises self-control* in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I *discipline my body and make it my slave*, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:24–27, NASB)

Therefore, *put to death the members of your body* to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed. (Colossians 3:5, authors' paraphrase)

Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for *bodily discipline* is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. (1 Timothy 4:7–8, NASB)

At first glance, these texts—especially the italicized words—can seem a bit puzzling. But, as we will discover, they express insights about human nature and flourishing so very deep that, once again, the insights of the Bible expose the shallowness of our culture in breathtaking fashion. To understand this biblical teaching, we must first clarify four concepts: *habit*, *character*, *flesh*, and *body*.

A *habit* is an ingrained tendency to act, think, or feel a certain way without needing to choose to do so. The way you write the letters of the alphabet is not something you need to think about. It is a habit learned years earlier, and you concentrate on what you are writing, not on the style of handwriting. *Character* is the sum total of your habits, good and bad. We could say that “penmanship character” is the sum total of your good and bad writing habits; it is your handwriting style.

Biblical terms such as *flesh* (*sarx* in the Greek) or *body* (*soma*) have a wide field of meaning,

depending on the context. Sometimes *flesh* and *body* mean the same thing, but in the previous passages, there is a unique and important meaning for each. *Body* is pretty obvious. In contrast to the soul, it refers to our living, animated physical aspect. The body can be seen and touched, and it is composed of tissue, skin and bone, various organs (the heart, for example), and systems (the nervous system, for example).

Now, this is crucial: The *flesh* in these passages refers to the sinful tendencies or habits that reside in the body and whose nature is opposite that of the kingdom of God. To understand these more fully and to appreciate their importance more deeply, let's return to learning to play golf. What I am about to say may sound a bit forced, but I mean for it to be taken literally.

When a man plays golf, he has a golf-character, that is, the sum of good and bad habits relevant for playing golf. His golf-flesh is the sum of his bad golf habits. Where do these bad habits reside? They dwell as ingrained tendencies in specific body parts, particular members of the body. His golf game may be weakened by bad habits in the wrists, the shoulders, or somewhere else. He may have good habits in his legs but bad habits, golf-flesh, residing in his shoulders. Golf-flesh resides in the specific members of his body.

How does he develop a good golf-character? Not simply by daily golf-readings coupled with regular exposure to motivational golf-music! No, he must present his members to a golf instructor at a driving range as instruments of golf "righteousness," instead of following his golf-flesh as an instrument of golf "unrighteousness." These are not figures of speech. Think of them as literal. By so presenting his members to a wise guide—a golf instructor—he can gradually get rid of bad golf-habits and replace them with good ones.

How does he present his members to a golf instructor? Two things are involved. First, he must dedicate himself to the pursuit of golf righteousness (to getting good at golf), and choose to submit as an apprentice to a master-teacher. Second, he does not simply engage in a one-time act of dedication to the master-teacher. To present his body to a golf instructor requires repeatedly engaging specific body parts in regular activities done over and over again, with the instructor in charge, and practicing different movements. For example, he may present the members of his body—say, the wrists—to the instructor by practicing over and over again a specific wrist movement, a particular swing. The result of such habitual bodily movement will be the replacement of bad habits that dwell in the wrists with good habits. The golf-flesh that resides in the wrists will give way to golf-righteousness in those members. Later the instructor may require the habitual presentation of other members—say, the hips—to replace bad habits that reside there.

A golf-discipline is a repeated golf exercise, a bodily movement involving specific body parts, repeated over and over again. This is done for the purpose of getting rid of golf-flesh and gaining golf-righteousness in the body. Notice that some golf-disciplines are done in practice in a way different from how they are done in the game. Like playing piano scales, they are performed to prepare the player for a different movement than actually takes place in the game. Like scales, the practice activity drops out during the real game (for example, an over-exaggerated swing to compensate for the tendency to hook the ball). Other practice activities are also done in the game (for example, keeping the head down while swinging). But the important thing is this: A golf-discipline is done repeatedly, not to get good at the discipline, but to get good at the game of golf.

THE DISCIPLINES OF ABSTINENCE AND ENGAGEMENT

The parallels with becoming good at life should be clear. When we present our body to God as a living sacrifice (see Romans 12:1), this involves not just a one-time act of dedication, but a habitual, repeated bodily exercise (see 1 Timothy 4:7-8; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27) involving specific body parts (see Romans 6:12-13, 19). This results in putting to death our bad habits (see Colossians 3:5), that is, removing the flesh that resides in those body parts and replacing it with righteousness that comes to reside in the members of our body. *A Christian spiritual discipline is a repeated bodily practice, done*

in dependence on the Holy Spirit and under the direction of Jesus and other wise teachers in His Way, to enable us to get good at certain things in life that we cannot learn to do by direct effort.

In the same way that golf-flesh resides in specific body parts (for example, the wrists), so sinful habits often reside in specific body parts. For example, anger resides in the stomach area, anxiety in the chest or shoulders, gossip in the tongue and mouth region, and lust in the eyes and other areas. A spiritual discipline is a repetitive practice that targets one of these areas in order to replace bad habits with good ones in dependence on the Spirit of the living God. Some disciplines—for example, playing piano scales—have no value in themselves and are totally means to an end (in this case, learning to play beautiful music). You don't practice the piano for its own sake but to get good at playing the piano! Other disciplines, such as practicing being honest at golf, are not only valuable as means to an end when done on the driving range (they form the habit of telling yourself the truth, of being honest in character) but they are also intrinsically valuable for their own sake when done during the game itself (it is good in itself to be honest while playing a game of golf!).

In the same way, some spiritual disciplines, such as the practice of journaling (the habit of writing down prayers to God, daily experiences of answered prayer, good and bad events, and so forth), are mere means to an end. These might include learning to remember answers to prayer, learning to concentrate on incidental daily events as occasions that have spiritual significance, or learning to talk to God deliberately and with emotion. Other disciplines are both means to an end and intrinsically valuable skills in their own right when done during the actual "game" of life. In chapter 4, we will examine prayer. There we will explain how prayer is an example of a practice that is both intrinsically valuable and a means to an end.

Dallas Willard points out that there are two categories of spiritual disciplines: those of abstinence/detachment and those of engagement. His list is not exhaustive, but it does contain most of the classical disciplines:

- Disciplines of abstinence: solitude, silence, fasting, frugality, chastity, secrecy, sacrifice
- Disciplines of engagement: study, worship, celebration, service, prayer, fellowship, confession, submission

In disciplines of abstinence, we unhook, detach, and abstain for a period of time and to varying degrees from the satisfaction of normal, appropriate desires, such as food, sleep, companionship, sex, music, comfort, financial security, recognition, and so forth. These disciplines help us address *sins of commission*—things we normally actively pursue. In general, it is not a good idea to detach from one of these without filling the resulting void with attachment to something positive. Therefore, disciplines of engagement go hand in hand with those of detachment. Engagement disciplines help us address *sins of omission*.

Day .24 Tuesday. March 24th, 2020.

Jolene Nolte, born in the Desert of California and raised in the Plains of Colorado, was introduced to Keats' 'To Autumn' by her high school English teacher. It was her gateway drug into poetry. She studied literature and theology at Biola University, and is completing her MA in the Arts at Regent, where she has the privilege of studying and writing poems as part of her theological education. Jolene loves drinking coffee from her teal ceramic mug, going for long walks in Pacific Spirit Park or at Spanish Banks, and hanging out with friends and her niece and nephews. She is part of the Sojourn community.

“Mary of Bethany” | Jolene Nolte

Passover was near;
therefore Jesus came.

He sits in her home,
Lazarus alive among them;
therefore Mary breaks

her alabaster flask, drenches
the Lord's road-weary
feet with her salt-tinged
tears and perfume's
dizzying fragrance.

No towel could suffice, and so,
forgetting everyone else,
she unveils her hair's
hitherto hidden softness.

What more could she offer
but every ounce of her tenderness?

Jesus received her letter;
therefore he stayed.

When he arrived—Lazarus
wrapped in linen, emitting
the stench of fresh
decomposition—a house
of mourners wailed.
Therefore, Mary stayed

'til Jesus asked for her.
She fell at his feet—
If only you had been here.

Both wept.

Mary's tears still
flowed, transfigured,
at the shock of resurrection.

Reflection questions:

The poem is a meditation on John 11 and 12.

- ◇ *How do Mary's tears change?*
- ◇ *Does the logic of the “therefore” (both in the poem and in John) always make sense?*
- ◇ *What do you make of them?*



Stephen B. Whatley, *The Face of Jesus*, oil on canvas, 2003

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. – 1 Peter 5:7

- *Have you ever pictured Jesus like this? What emotions do you project onto this image?*
- *There are many ways to interpret this painting. Do you see Jesus taking our burdens to the cross?*
- *Do you see the grieving face of God the Father for His Son?*
- *Do you see our Lord saddened by our pain, or by the state of the world?*
- *How else could you interpret it? How do you relate to the emotions in this painting?*
- *How do you think your cares and sorrows may compare or differ from those of Christ?*

Day 26. Thursday. March 26th, 2020.

Webber, R. (2008). *Ancient-future worship: proclaiming and enacting God's narrative* (pp. 89–92). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Robert Webber (1933 – 2007) was the son of a Baptist pastor. He became a professor of theology at Wheaton College in 1968 and grew to have a particular interest in Christian worship, writing more than 40 books on the subject. In 1998 he established the Robert E Webber Institute of Worship Studies which is the only graduate school in the USA to focus exclusively on worship education.

Because of my travels to various churches, worship conferences, and educational settings, I have met numerous people who have spoken to me about the present crisis of worship. It is a crisis in both traditional and contemporary settings. It is, you might say, a universal crisis. Traditional worship often feels dead, intellectual, and dry, whereas contemporary worship seems loud, oriented toward the self, and not very uplifting.

There are exceptions, however. I have been in traditional churches where worship is inspiring and spiritually challenging. And I have been in contemporary churches with a strong sense of the worship of almighty God. I don't think the solution is to choose one over the other. For example, I heard of the pastor of a liturgical church who said, "The problem with our worship is vestments, choir, hymns, and Eucharist. They keep people from coming to church, so we are going to get rid of all that and go contemporary." Big mistake. We need liturgical churches; we need contemporary churches. Both have a place in God's church, and both can do what I am writing about in this book.

The Crisis of Worship

While the current crisis of worship is very complex and resists a simplistic answer, I wish to offer a threefold critique that is easy to remember and that goes to the heart of the issues. I suggest that a key to the crisis is to evaluate worship through the lens of content, structure, and style.

This book is about the crisis of *content*. If worship is, as I have discussed, remembrance and anticipation, then current worship needs to be considered through these two biblical motifs.

I readily acknowledge that remembrance is a vital part of traditional hymnology and contemporary songs. Pick up an evangelical hymnbook and make your way through the hymns and songs produced by evangelical writers, and there you will find a rich treasury of sung testimony to God's wonderful works in history. The same is true of many choruses. Remembrance of God's mighty deeds is often referred to in the lyrics of traditional and contemporary songs. The problem is that God's overall work in history is ignored. His mighty deeds for world redemption are *individualized*. There is very little awareness in evangelical music that God does more than save *me*. The theme of connecting creation with incarnation that leads to re-creation is simply lacking. Therefore, even though our worship is conscious of remembrance, it is a truncated content. It does not span all of history and reach into the believer's anticipation of not only his or her salvation but of the salvation of the whole world.

The second crisis is one of *structure*. The story of God is communicated in the narrative of Word and Table. This structure is not an order of mere convenience, but an order which itself is deeply rooted in God's narrative. When the ancient structure of Word and Table is followed, worship itself narrates the worshipers' experience through remembrance and anticipation. The Word, with its readings and preaching primarily remembers God's story through the Christ event. The eucharistic prayers, songs, and symbols then usher the congregation into the anticipation of the future kingdom of God. These realities do not find *conscious* expression in evangelical worship. The basic structure of Word and Eucharist held in any church, however, is always pregnant with God's story. The story awaits its birth by the pastor and the congregation to bring the *content* of our worship in line with the biblical

order of worship. This simple move will facilitate the recovery of remembrance and anticipation.

The third crisis is that of *style*, which is directly related to the crisis of content and structure. If it is acknowledged that the content of worship is remembrance and anticipation, it should be an easy step to take to see that the structure of worship serves the content of worship. The Word remembers and the Eucharist anticipates. (This does not mean there is no anticipation in the Word nor remembrance in the Eucharist. It is a broad generalization that stimulates provocative thought about what worship does rather than a stiff, unbending framework.) The style of doing Word and Table is a matter of making the content and structure of worship *indigenous* to the local setting. The greatest error I have seen in the style of worship—both traditional and contemporary—is to program it. Traditional worship strings together Scripture readings, prayers, psalms, choir, solo numbers, offering, and announcements and then adds the sermon and benediction at the end. Usually there is little thought given to narrating God's story and vision. On the other hand, most contemporary worship leaders think in terms of opening with thirty minutes of songs and choruses strung together, followed by a time for announcements and offering, followed by the sermon (not generally regarded as worship). The sermon is usually topical, often supplemented with a few Bible stories, but seldom about the Good News that God has won a decisive victory over the powers of evil and will eventually set up his kingdom forever. Consider what is happening in our world today with the militant terrorists who wish to cast Israel into the sea and scale the wall of the Western world and bring it to ruin. What is more relevant: a therapeutic sermon that makes you feel good about yourself, or a sermon that speaks to who narrates the world?

I find that thinking about worship in terms of content, structure, and style is a good way to organize our thoughts. Since content and structure are my primary issues, I will not spend much time with style, which is an important issue, but not as much so as the other two. Throughout history there have been numerous styles in both Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism (although one can say that historic liturgies have evolved into fairly permanent styles) and certainly among Protestants.

We turn now to examples from ancient worship where both the content of worship and the structure of worship speak of remembrance and anticipation.

Day 27. Friday. March 27th, 2020.

Meditate and reflect on [Christ is Enough](#) as sung by Hillsongs. Listen to the song a couple of times leaving space in between to reflect and pray as the Lord leads you.

Christ is my reward
And all of my devotion
Now there's nothing in this world
That could ever satisfy

Through every trial
My soul will sing
No turning back
I've been set free

Christ is enough for me
Christ is enough for me
Everything I need is in You
Everything I need

Christ my all in all
The joy of my salvation
And this hope will never fail
Heaven is our home

Through every storm
My soul will sing
Jesus is here
To God be the glory

Christ is enough for me
Christ is enough for me
Everything I need is in You
Everything I need

I have decided to follow Jesus
No turning back
No turning back

I have decided to follow Jesus
No turning back
No turning back (the cross)

The cross before me
The world behind me
No turning back
No turning back

The cross before me
The world behind me
No turning back
No turning back

Christ is enough for me
Christ is enough for me
Everything I need is in You
Everything I need (Christ is enough)

Christ is enough for me
Christ is enough for me
Everything I need is in You
Everything I need

I have decided to follow Jesus
No turning back
No turning back

I have decided to follow Jesus
No turning back
No turning back (I have decided)

I have decided to follow Jesus
No turning back
No turning back

I have decided to follow Jesus
No turning back
No turning back

(music by Hillsongs)

End by using this song as part of your prayer and consider these words throughout your day.

Contemplative Prayer

This is the ancient practice of opening our whole being – body, mind and spirit – to God’s abiding presence. It is quiet but active, restful but attentive, intentional but not goal-oriented. It is making real in our experience God’s love “poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 5:5). It requires patience. The fruit is often experienced outside of the practice itself. Just a physical exercise may be tough in the doing, and yet we carry the benefits with us through our day, so is contemplative (or centering) prayer. Have no goal in mind. It may feel like nothing has happened. Persevere. Showing up expresses a desire for God and He will respond. Silence is important. “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). There is a hearing and seeing beyond words as we open up our unconscious mind and the depth of our souls to God.

- “ Plan initially for 15-20 minutes. (Set a timer and then forget about the clock).
- “ Sit or kneel in a way that is neither too uncomfortable (distracts) or too comfortable (snoozy).
- “ Be in a quiet space without distractions.
- “ It may be helpful to have a ‘sacred’ object (cross, Bible, photo, icon, etc) in easy view. .

1. *Choose a ‘sacred’ word or phrase.*

- “ In a short time of prayer ask the Holy Spirit to give you a sacred word or phrase.
- “ Use one that readily comes to mind (don’t search for a “perfect” one). E.g. “good shepherd”, “grace”, “comforter”, “prince of peace”, “forgiven”, “with you always”, “Lamb of God” “joy”.

2. *Softly speak your sacred word or phrase and then be still.*

- “ Dwell in God’s presence.
- “ Fellowship is presence not talk. (Like enjoying a view with a friend.)

3. *Abide. Let God’s presence touch you.*

- “ Let normal thoughts and feelings come. Don’t try to ‘empty’ your mind, but don’t let a particular thought take over.
- “ Feel your soul letting go. (Do not go searching for thoughts or feelings.) Wait. Rest.
- “ Let Jesus lift any weight off your soul – fear, frustration, disappointment, desire, sadness, loneliness, anger, . . . Give it over. (Do not analyze, rationalize or sentimentalize.)
- “ Enjoy, don’t strive. Let joy and peace in. Smile at good thoughts and feelings.
- “ Let go of tightness in your face and body. Breathe rhythmically. Release your limbs. Let God’s peace spread to your neck, shoulders, arms, back, legs, ...
- “ If you doze, or your thoughts wander unhelpfully, return gently with your sacred word. (Don’t use it repetitively like a mantra.)
- “ If images crowd your mind look at your sacred object and slow your mind. Be attentive.
- “ Experience gentleness. Receive grace. (Like enjoying a gentle breeze, or the warmth of a bath.)

4. *When the timer rings, end by thoughtfully praying the Lord’s Prayer.*

Day 29. Monday. March 30th, 2020.

Webber, R. (2008). *Ancient-future worship: proclaiming and enacting God's narrative* (pp. 92-98). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Worship in the Ancient Church

The subject of worship in the ancient church is vast and covers six hundred years. It is impossible in a book of this length to address all the complex developments, but it is possible for me to provide several examples of worship content and structure that will at least illustrate the themes of remembrance and anticipation. I will begin with the earliest description of worship from the middle of the second century, then speak to the theology of the period and provide several examples from both preaching and the eucharistic liturgy.

The Earliest Description of Worship

The earliest noncanonical description of worship appears in Justin Martyr's work *The First Apology*. Christians had been accused and actually persecuted because of a rumor that when they met to worship they sacrificed an infant and drank its blood and ate its flesh. The *Apology* was written to the emperor to explain what Christians believe and how they worship and live. It was written in AD 150 and stands today as one of the most important documents of the early church because of the insight it provides on early Christian faith and practice. Here is the description of worship:

And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows, and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need.

According to Justin Martyr we may say the following things about ancient worship:

1. The public worship of the church took place on Sunday, the day of the resurrection. The *day* of worship itself is important. In the Hebrew tradition the day of worship was Saturday, the Sabbath. It is the day of God's completion of the creation and, therefore, the day to rest as God rested. ("On the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating he had done," Gen. 2:2-3.) Saturday is the day of rest. But on Sunday, the first day of the week (Mark 16:2), God who rested created again. This time the resurrection reveals that Christ himself is the "new creation." In him "the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ" (2 Cor. 5:17-18). The very day of worship discloses that worship is not about me enthroning God in the heavens, but about Christ who has reconciled all things to God through his death and resurrection.

2. Worship was characterized by the reading and proclamation of Scripture and the celebration of the Table. I will comment further on these two aspects of worship in chapters 6 and 7. It is sufficient at this point to state that Word and Table are not about me but about Christ, who is revealed in the Scripture and at the Table.

3. The presider “instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things.” We now come to the *me* aspect of worship. Here we see that worship is not that which I do, but *that which is done in me*. That is, worship, which reveals Christ, forms me by making me aware that Jesus is my spirituality and that worship is to form my spiritual life into the pattern of living into the death and resurrection of Jesus. Paul speaks to the Corinthians about this meaning of worship when he states, “Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that *those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again*” (2 Cor. 5:14–15, emphasis added). The purpose of worship is not that “I am the source of God’s worship,” but that Jesus is the one man who truly did God’s service (worship) of reclaiming the world for God. So my worship, in union with Christ, is to be, as Justin states, an “imitation” of “these good things” (the disclosure of Christ in Word and Eucharist). Worship nourishes the spiritual life, then, because it discloses Christ as the one who does for me what I can’t do for myself and “compels” me to doxology on my lips and to live in the pattern of death and resurrection.

4. The congregation prays.

5. Prayers and thanksgiving (Eucharist) are said over bread and wine, which are then consumed by the people present. Notice that the eucharistic prayers are said “according to his ability.” The prayers at the Table now become fixed, as we will see in Hippolytus, AD 215 (discussed later in this chapter).

6. Bread and wine are sent to those who are absent.

7. A collection is taken and distributed to widows, orphans, the sick, those in prison, strangers, and all who are in need.

Justin does not give us a commentary on the theology of worship. What we do gain from his description, however, is the *structure of worship*. From the structure of Word and Table we can discern the story of God. Word and Table follow revelation and the Christ event. Broadly speaking, revelation constituted the verbal and oral presentation of God’s work in history. On the other hand, the Christ event, which includes the incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, eternal intercession on our behalf, and sure return to restore all creation and rule forever, constitutes signs that anticipate the future of God and the world. However, it must be admitted that neither Word alone nor Eucharist alone contain the full story.

Theology of the Ancient Church

Before looking at more examples of the worship of the ancient church, we should consider the dominant theology of the time. The ancient church was in a great struggle with Gnosticism—a heresy that goes all the way back to New Testament times. I have previously mentioned the Gnostics’ rejection of the Old Testament, of creation, of any embrace of the physical such as an enfleshed Christ, and of any sacramental signs such as water, bread, and wine. For them, to be spiritual meant the spirit was opposed to all flesh and matter. The incarnation was not a real physical act but a spiritual *emanation* proceeding from the spirit of God to tell people the secret that would release them from their prison—the human body and earthly experience.

The battle between Orthodox Christians and the Gnostics raged around the question, “What did the apostles teach?” The Gnostics believed their faith came directly from a secret tradition held by the apostles and handed down to a few elite. The argument of the Orthodox, on the other hand, was that the Christian faith was not a secret but fully public for anyone who wished to know it. Furthermore, the Orthodox argued that the apostolic doctrine had been handed down from the apostles to their successors and that what was believed in the church was truly apostolic and dependable. (This is the origin of apostolic tradition and apostolic succession. It also accounts for the Apostles’ Creed, which in its opening confession affirms, “I believe in God the Father Almighty, *maker* of heaven and earth,” emphasis added.) In this battle, won by the Orthodox by the end of the second century, the church affirms the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament to be one God. Creation is

good. God became involved in the creation, even incarnate, to win it back to himself. Redemption, no longer the exclusive right of the soul, has now been affirmed by the consensus of the church to apply to all things created. God renews the face of the earth.

The two most prominent theologians of the late second century who fought the Gnostics and advanced the arguments that Orthodox faith was the faith of the apostles were Irenaeus and Tertullian. I will provide a few quotes from Irenaeus's *Against Heresies* (AD 180) to help us understand how this apostolic theology influenced the worship of the ancient church, but if you have time, I suggest you look at his work in full, especially book IV.

To begin, Irenaeus uses the following phrase or some version of it repeatedly in his argument against the Gnostics: "Now the church, although scattered over the whole civilized world to the end of the earth, *received from the Apostles and their disciples its faith.*" This particular introduction is from the "rule of faith," an early creedal statement that summarized the faith. It is noteworthy that part of the confession includes the restoration of all flesh at the end of history—a strong affirmation of the anticipation of the kingdom to come. The confession states that the church believes in "his coming from the heavens in the glory of the Father to *restore all things and to raise up all flesh.*"

Throughout his work, Irenaeus repeatedly draws on an incarnational theology to drive home that God saves his whole creation. God has descended in the incarnation and taken union with humanity so that humanity may ascend into union with him. This profound theme of the incarnation has rich implications for an earthed worship. By "earthed worship" I mean to emphasize how ancient worship is not an escape from this world. Worship uses the substance of nature—water, oil, bread, wine, movement, symbol—to proclaim that all of creation has been redeemed. This quote from Irenaeus captures the essential key the incarnation plays in ancient theology and worship:

So, then, since the Lord redeemed us by his own blood, and gave his soul for our souls, and his flesh for our bodies, and poured out the Spirit of the Father to bring about the union and communion of God and man—bringing God down to men by [the working of] the Spirit, and again raising man to God by his incarnation—and by his coming firmly and truly giving us incorruption, by our communion with God, all the teachings of the heretics are destroyed. Vain are those who say that his appearance [on earth] was a mere fiction. These things did not take place fictitiously but in reality.

Irenaeus goes on in the same text to develop the theology of recapitulation. This theology was first developed by the apostles in the comparison they drew between the first Adam, who brings sin, death, and condemnation, and the second Adam, who brings righteousness, life, and justification (see Rom. 5:12–21; 1 Cor. 15).

I have shown too that to say that his appearance was only seeming is the same as to say that he took nothing from Mary. He would not have had real flesh and blood, by which he paid the price [of our salvation], unless he had indeed recapitulated in himself the ancient making of Adam. Vain therefore are the Valentinians who teach this, and so reject the [new] life of the flesh and scorn what God has made.

The recapitulation accomplished by God's Spirit is fulfilled by Jesus's death and resurrection where he wins a great victory over sin, death, and the devil. Because of this victory, which he accomplished *in the flesh*, he wins back his entire created order.

The Garden of Gethsemane reverses what happened in the Garden of Eden, and now God will rule forever in his regained garden. His world is now the place of his habitation. His glory shows forth to the ends of the earth.

He therefore completely renewed all things, both taking up the battle against our enemy, and

crushing him who at the beginning had led us captive in Adam, trampling on his head, as you find in Genesis that God said to the serpent, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he will be on the watch for your head, and you will be on the watch for his heel." From then on it was proclaimed that he who was to be born of a virgin, after the likeness of Adam, would be on the watch for the serpent's head—this is the seed of which the apostle says in the Letter to the Galatians, "The law of works was established until the seed should come to whom the promise was made." He shows this still more clearly in the same Epistle when he says, "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman." The enemy would not have been justly conquered unless it had been a man [made] of woman who conquered him. For it was by a woman that he had power over man from the beginning, setting himself up in opposition to man. Because of this the Lord also declares himself to be the Son of Man, so renewing in himself that primal man from whom the formation [of man] by woman began, that as our race went down to death by a man who was conquered we might ascend again to life by a man who overcame; and as death won the palm of victory over us by a man, so we might by a man receive the palm of victory over death.

The point of presenting the theology of the ancient church is to show that *worship does this theology*. It sings, tells, and enacts God's story, not *my* story. The primary focus of worship then and now is not me, the worshiper, but God, who redeems the world. Worship does God's story, and God, who is the subject of worship, repeats, so to speak, his own story. God, through worship, works on me through his story to elicit praise on my lips and obedience in my living. When this happens, worship takes place.

“Too Much” | Emily Dickinson

I should have been too glad, I see,
Too lifted for the scant degree
Of life's penurious round;
My little circuit would have shamed
This new circumference, have blamed
The homelier time behind.

I should have been too saved, I see,
Too rescued; fear too dim to me
That I could spell the prayer
I knew so perfect yesterday, —
That scalding one, "Sabachthani,"
Recited fluent here.

Earth would have been too much, I see,
And heaven not enough for me;
I should have had the joy
Without the fear to justify, —
The palm without the Calvary;
So, Saviour, crucify.

Defeat whets victory, they say;
The reefs in old Gethsemane
Endear the shore beyond.
'T is beggars banquets best define;
'T is thirsting vitalizes wine, —
Faith faints to understand.



Margaret Graziano, *Morning Prayer*, oil on canvas, contemporary

For Reflection:

Often our contemplation of nature can lead us to prayer, or in fact be prayer in and of itself. The title of this painting expresses this reality, and it is our hope that as you embark on a pilgrimage today that you will experience how nature can draw you closer to our Creator God.

Day 32. Thursday. April 2nd, 2020.

Bulgakov, S. (2008). *Churchly Joy: Orthodox Devotions for the Church Year*. (B. Jakim, Trans.) (pp. 70-72). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Sergei Bulgakov (1871 - 1944) was a Russian Orthodox priest and theologian, as well as a philosopher and economist. He was a sixth generation orthodox priest from a line that went back to the sixteenth century. For a time he became a Marxist, but recovered his faith in arguments with Trotsky. Bulgakov is considered a theologian of significance even though some thought he pushed the boundaries in his views on sophiology (wisdom). These excerpts are from his more devotional and mystical writings.

XV

The Doors of Repentance

"Open to me the doors of repentance, O Giver of Life!"

At this time the Church prays for the opening of the doors of repentance. What are these doors? Where are they? How often we complain and lament that we do not know repentance, that we do not know how to repent. Our heart remains empty and cold even when we seek repentance; and our consciousness continues to slumber. Nevertheless, we know that there is no salvation without repentance. Without repentance, one cannot approach the Kingdom of God; without it, living faith is impossible. Repentance is the salt that gives the food its savor. How can we enter into its power?

Repentance begins in us by a conscious seeing and knowledge of our sin: "For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me"—the soul attests about itself in the Psalmist's cry of repentance (Ps. 51:3). For a period of time, one can fail to be conscious of one's sin while remaining enslaved by it. The soul is embraced by a deep sleep, which is like death; and if it does not awaken, this will be the sleep of real spiritual death. As long as people, in their pagan blindness, remain ignorant of their sin, they hate the very word "sin," and become infuriated by the very idea of sin. Even if dimly, the soul feels that herein is concealed a condemnation of all of its past ways as well as a call to renewal: "repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15). But, in us, inertia and self-love resist this call.

Without entering into repentance, the "natural" man cannot become the spiritual man. And here it is, the *first* door of repentance: the knowledge of one's sin and the knowledge of one's enslavement by it. In the darkness of the soul a beam of light is suddenly ignited; and in this light a human being sees himself before the face of God. The eye of God sees us through our conscience; the latter is God's testimony about Himself in man's soul. Conscience judges us with a just judgment, fair and undeceived; and this judgment is, as it were, an anticipation of Christ's Last Judgment. Conscience is the greatest gift of God's love which God has bestowed upon man; for what is "more necessary than conscience" (according to the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete)? Through conscience we see ourselves in the light of God's justice: "that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest" (Ps. 51:4). To every man, not only to the Christian but also to the pagan, is entrusted this infinitely precious gift of God. But the first movement of the soul when the latter sees itself in the light of conscience in its sin, is to desire to hide itself from the face of God in the shadow of the trees, as our progenitors did in Eden when they saw their nakedness. Tranquil complacency and proud self-satisfaction desert a man's soul to be replaced by shame, confusion, and even fear in the face of that which has been revealed to this man about himself. This is the arduous and dangerous hour before sunrise, because cowardly dejection usually lies in wait here, a deep disappointment in oneself.

However, the power of repentance brings us not to the inactive contemplation of sin, but to the active struggle against it. Repentance compels us to seek liberation from sin, purification: "Create in

me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Ps. 51:10), prays the soul together with the Psalmist. Henceforth, there begins the *labor* of repentance, without which salvation is not accomplished; and this labor has a beginning but does not know an end, for it extends over our entire life. Without this labor there is no work of repentance. There is only the desire for it.

And this is the *second* door of repentance. Woe unto us if we limit ourselves to knowledge of sin but, afraid of this labor, refrain from the direct struggle against sin; for such a man has no "cloak" for his sin (John 15:22). But self-knowledge leads to self-reproach, and self-reproach leads to new self-knowledge: The yawning abyss of the heart becomes wider and wider; new sins are revealed in its memory; and coiled at its very bottom is the serpent of original sin. However, attention to oneself, the labor of the spirit, does not lead to weakening or despondency of the soul. This labor strengthens our courage, renews the powers of our soul, "salts" the essence of the latter. One who repents of sins makes an invisible exertion, abides in a state of spiritual intensity, which is reflected in his entire life. And he has his consolations, for the Father in Heaven bestows upon him abundant gifts in the sacrament of repentance, gives him the joy of forgiveness. "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit" (Ps. 51:12), once again the repentant soul prays with the Psalmist. The ascetic feat of repentance is the heart of all ascetic feats; that is why, among great ascetics, repentance is associated with the gracious blossoming of all the spiritual powers. Repentance liberates man's original essence from the distortions caused by sin. In order to bestow upon the sinner the salvific fruit of repentance, the Lord gave the remission of sins in the sacrament of repentance. Through repentance, that which was ceases to be; the sores caused by sin are healed by the power of Christ. However, only that is erased which is condemned and overcome by man in his heart. Man himself must unfurl the sad pages in the book of his life in order that they be erased by the grace of the sacrament. That which is not repented is not erased. True repentance is useful for all things: it gives healing and health, peace and joy, humility and courage, sobriety and vigilance. By its battle with sin, repentance strengthens our love for God and attests to this love. We always need the power of repentance, but the Holy Church has recognized and blessed the forty days of the Great Fast as the express period of repentance. And this day our souls are called to repentance by the prayer: "Open for me the doors of repentance, O Giver of Life!"

Day 33. Friday. April 3rd, 2020.

Before listening to the choral work [Misere Mei](#) composed by Gregorio Allegri ask the Lord to speak to you as you, both, read the text and listen to this choral work. Read through the text before you listen to it as it is sung in Latin. It is a longer work and so you may want some extra time to read and listen to it. Let the music wash over you as you listen.

Have Mercy On Me, God
Have mercy on me, God
According to your great kindness
And according to the multitude of your
mercies,
Erase my iniquities
Wash me completely from my iniquities
And cleanse me of my sins
For I know my iniquities
And my sins are always before me
To you alone, I have sinned
And done evil before you
That you may be fair in your speech
And justified in your judgement
Behold, I was conceived in iniquity
And in sin did my mother conceive me
Behold, you desire truth in the inward
parts
And you teach me wisdom in the hidden
places
Purify me with hyssop and I will be clean
Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow
Let me hear your joy and gladness
And my humble bones will rejoice
Turn your face away from my sins
And erase all of my iniquities
Create in me a pure heart, oh, God,
And renew your right spirit within me
Do not turn me away from your sight,
And do not take your Holy Spirit from me

Return your gladness and salvation to
me
And uphold me with a willing spirit
I will teach sinners your way
And they will be converted unto you
Save me from blood,
God, God of my salvation
My tongue will praise of your righteous-
ness
Lord, open my lips
And my mouth will sing your glory
Because you have not desired sacrifices
For you don't delight in sacrifices, or I
would do so
Nor do you desire burnt offerings
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit
A broken and humble heart
God will not despise
Do well before the Lord in your good
pleasure to Zion
And build the walls of Jerusalem
Then you accept the sacrifices of right-
eousness
In oblations and burnt offerings
Then they will offer bulls on your altar.

*End by using this song as part of your prayer
and consider these words throughout your day.*

Contemplative Prayer

This is the ancient practice of opening our whole being – body, mind and spirit – to God's abiding presence. It is quiet but active, restful but attentive, intentional but not goal-oriented. It is making real in our experience God's love "poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 5:5). It requires patience. The fruit is often experienced outside of the practice itself. Just a physical exercise may be tough in the doing, and yet we carry the benefits with us through our day, so is contemplative (or centering) prayer. Have no goal in mind. It may feel like nothing has happened. Persevere. Showing up expresses a desire for God and He will respond. Silence is important. "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). There is a hearing and seeing beyond words as we open up our unconscious mind and the depth of our souls to God.

- " Plan initially for 15-20 minutes. (Set a timer and then forget about the clock).
- " Sit or kneel in a way that is neither too uncomfortable (distracts) or too comfortable (snoozy).
- " Be in a quiet space without distractions.
- " It may be helpful to have a 'sacred' object (cross, Bible, photo, icon, etc) in easy view. .

1. *Choose a 'sacred' word or phrase.*

- " In a short time of prayer ask the Holy Spirit to give you a sacred word or phrase.
- " Use one that readily comes to mind (don't search for a "perfect" one). E.g. "good shepherd", "grace", "comforter", "prince of peace", "forgiven", "with you always", "Lamb of God" "joy".

2. *Softly speak your sacred word or phrase and then be still.*

- " Dwell in God's presence.
- " Fellowship is presence not talk. (Like enjoying a view with a friend.)

3. *Abide. Let God's presence touch you.*

- " Let normal thoughts and feelings come. Don't try to 'empty' your mind, but don't let a particular thought take over.
- " Feel your soul letting go. (Do not go searching for thoughts or feelings.) Wait. Rest.
- " Let Jesus lift any weight off your soul – fear, frustration, disappointment, desire, sadness, loneliness, anger, . . . Give it over. (Do not analyze, rationalize or sentimentalize.)
- " Enjoy, don't strive. Let joy and peace in. Smile at good thoughts and feelings.
- " Let go of tightness in your face and body. Breathe rhythmically. Release your limbs. Let God's peace spread to your neck, shoulders, arms, back, legs, ...
- " If you doze, or your thoughts wander unhelpfully, return gently with your sacred word. (Don't use it repetitively like a mantra.)
- " If images crowd your mind look at your sacred object and slow your mind. Be attentive.
- " Experience gentleness. Receive grace. (Like enjoying a gentle breeze, or the warmth of a bath.)

4. *When the timer rings, end by thoughtfully praying the Lord's Prayer.*

Day 35. Monday. April 6th, 2020.

Holy Week

Bulgakov, S. (2008). *Churchly Joy: Orthodox Devotions for the Church Year*. (B. Jakim, Trans.) (pp. 116-118). Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

XXIII

*Trampling Down Death by Death: Diptych**

I

"... love is strong as death."

Song of Solomon 8:6

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son ... that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16-17). The Son removed from Himself the Divine glory: He "came down from heaven," became man, and bore the entire weight of the life of the sinful world. He remained obedient to the Father's will in His preaching and in His works, in His suffering and in His patience. "The LORD hath laid on him the sins of us all" (Isa. 53:6; the King James Version has been modified to conform with the Russian Bible). In agony under the burden of these sins, the only one without sin cried out: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death"; "if it be possible, let this cup pass from me" (Matt. 26:38, 39). "It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief" (Isa. 53:10). And this was the cup of death. The Father sent the only begotten Son to death for His people, and the Son went to receive this death. The God-Man died—"for all men and for all things."

The death of God cannot be fathomed by our thought but tears the latter to shreds. For God is Life, and Christ Himself called Himself Life; but here Life is in the grave. "Life, how can you die?" In the death of Christ we venerate the supreme mystery of the Divine Incarnation, the sacrificial self-diminution of Divinity; and this mystery is the power of God's love for man. This death is the exhaustive fullness and therefore the *limit* for the sacrifice of love, connected with the end of love's sufferings. Otherwise, these sufferings would have become "eternal" torments. Christ's sacrifice does not know any bounds. The Son gave *all* of Himself, His *entire* life, to the sacrificial obedience; however, a *limitless* duration of this obedience would have contradicted its fullness, for if it were limitless, then all could not have been given, but the Son had to give all. The sacrifice of the Divine love does not tolerate limitation: "God so loved the world...." Only death could have encompassed this fullness of sacrifice; it includes everything in itself, even the sacrificing one himself.

But was not death unnatural for the only one without sin, since God did not create death and it entered the world by sin? Death did not have power over the only one without sin, but it could be accepted *voluntarily*, permitted in the capacity of the coercion of the prince of this world. And this made this death more deathly. Its deathly sorrow—"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death"—was the sorrow of all sorrows and the sickness of all sicknesses. In order to receive death God had to remove from Himself His Divinity; He had to stop being God, as it were. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46)—that is the cry on the cross of the dying God, of God forsaken by God. It is as if the Holy Spirit Himself, the Giver of Life, had to "forsake" Him, in order for this death to be "finished."

Adam's sin was death-bearing for the entire world, of which he was the center. And the death of the God-Man, who gave up His spirit on the cross (Luke 23:46), was in turn a new death for the entire world and a judgment over this world. His death was the entire *fullness* of death: the sun grew dark, the earth trembled, and darkness descended upon the earth at the hour of His death on the cross. This was, as it were, the death convulsion of the entire world. The death of the old Adam was the fruit of his selfhood, which separated him from God. The old Adam could no longer retain life in himself by

his own power; death became a bitter necessity for him. But the Son of God, who in His human essence had defeated the death-bearing selfhood, had power over life: "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down" (John 10:18). The God-Man Himself voluntarily receives death in sacrificial self-slaughter. In him "it is finished"; all is given to love for the world, and there is nothing more to give and nothing more to accomplish. This voluntary death is love which has defeated selfhood.

There arrives the triumphantly joyous peace of the Blessed Sabbath. The first sabbath of God crowns the completion of creation, while the second sabbath of God, in the grave, crowns the sacrificial death. The separation of the soul from the body in death is unnatural for the human essence; this separation is a negation, a defect, of life—not only in the agony of dying but also in the sorrow of the repose of death. Life in death is "hell," and the death of the God-Man was also a "descent into hell." But for Him over whom death was deprived of power but permitted only by His voluntary acceptance, the descent into hell too was a continuation of His ministry. The sun rose in the midnight land, in the darkness of death. "When He, immortal life, descended into death, then hell too He put to death by the shining of Divinity." The word of Life resounded in hell; the bodiless shades heard Christ's good news. The sun follows its course also in the sunset land.

During His three-day sojourn in the grave, the Lord tastes death together with the human race. He shares it with the human race. And this death is not a sleep of passivity; it is a continuing ministry, uninterrupted obedience to the Father's will. *This death is love.* In Christ's grave, selfhood is annihilated, the sting of death is abolished, death dies. This death of the Immortal One is the overcoming of death, for the power of death is selfhood, whereas Christ's death is love. "Love is strong as death," but it is more powerful than death.

Day 36. Tuesday. April 7th, 2020.

Holy Week

Jolene Nolte, born in the Desert of California and raised in the Plains of Colorado, was introduced to Keats' 'To Autumn' by her high school English teacher. It was her gateway drug into poetry. She studied literature and theology at Biola University, and is completing her MA in the Arts at Regent, where she has the privilege of studying and writing poems as part of her theological education. Jolene loves drinking coffee from her teal ceramic mug, going for long walks in Pacific Spirit Park or at Spanish Banks, and hanging out with friends and her niece and nephews. She is part of the Sojourn community.

“Good Friday 2019” | Jolene Nolte

His silence pierces her (or so she
tells herself, being of late
given to melodrama. See above.)

An eviscerated shade (see?), she walks through
morning fog, receives
it as a garment, as a shroud.

Eight years old on Good Friday night,
fearful of her flu—her body retching,
rejecting its contents, trailing that awful
acidic taste—she heard her brother say,
“If you feel this way, imagine
how Jesus felt.”

Some comfort, she thought, as she cradled
the beige bucket. *At least Sprite
is better than vinegar.* But her terror
took a new texture:

If God did not let Jesus escape, if Jesus
who is God does not avoid but writhes
in pain, what hope does any have for reprieve?

Fog lifts by afternoon, by evening it is Christ's flesh she eats—
flesh of her speared Lord, who in reckless love exposed
himself. More harrowing than his cry of agony,
the God-forsaken silence.

She has tasted but a crumb of Love's wretchedness.

Reflection questions:

Again, you may not relate to or react so intensely to a beloved's rebuffing silence or to the flu, but have you had an experienced illness or rejection? What if life in Christ is not about avoiding such pain but about following the one who took on our suffering?



R.O. Hodgell, *Betrayal*, linocut, c. 1960

Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him." Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him. Jesus replied, "Friend, do what you came for." Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him.

– Matthew 26:48-50

The harsh lines of this image emphasize the cruelty of this betrayal. Heavy black lines and sharp angles lend a satirical aura to the scene. On the left, we see armed men waiting to arrest Jesus. Peter is in the act of cutting off the ear of one of them. On the right, a few of the disciples cower in fear. And in the centre, Judas grasps Jesus and aggressively tries to kiss him. Jesus looks unsurprised but leans away from his betrayer.

- Look into Jesus' face. It reveals many emotions: sadness, revulsion, resignation. What else do you see?
- Place yourself in this scene. Who do you most relate to – Peter in action, the soldiers lying in wait, the fearful disciples, or the betrayer? How do you think you would have reacted had you witnessed this betrayal?
- How do you think you would respond in the place of Jesus, asked to make a sacrifice for others with no personal gain?

Day 38. Maundy Thursday. April 9th, 2020.

Peterson, E. H. (2006). *Living the Resurrection: The Risen Christ in Everyday Life* (pp. 11-17). Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.

Eugene Petersen (1932 – 2018) was a Presbyterian minister, scholar, theologian, author and poet. He has written more than 30 books, one of which is *The Message* a paraphrase of the Bible. He was a professor at Regent College for many years.

WHAT THE CHURCH LEAVES OUT

Let me paraphrase something that Pope John Paul II once said as he addressed a group of leaders from Third World countries: Don't look at the Western nations for models in your development. They know how to make things, but they don't know how to live with them. They have acquired a mind-boggling technology, but they've forgotten how to raise their children.

This is the context for this book. It's a cultural context in which souls are pretty much ignored in the rush of getting something or making something. The formation of souls is a major responsibility of the Christian church—lives formed by the Holy Spirit “to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13). But by and large, it is a neglected responsibility. We have a lot of special programs to take care of it, but they are always at the periphery of something else. There is far more attention being given to spiritual formation in the secular world of New Age spirituality and psychological development than in the church. And however laudable the attention being given by the teachers and guides of this world, they are attempting to do it quite apart from Jesus Christ or with Jesus only at the margins. Therefore, they are leaving out the biggest part, which is resurrection.

My conviction is that the church is the community that God has set at the center of the world to keep the world centered. One essential aspect of this centering is commonly called spiritual formation—the lifelong formation of the life of Christ in us. It consists of what goes on between the moment we realize and accept our identity as Christians and the time when we sit down to “the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Revelation 19:9). It deals with the way we live in the time being, the time that intervenes between kneeling at the altar and getting hit by the Mack truck.

I take up this subject with considerable urgency, not only because of the widespread secularization of spiritual formation in the culture around us, but also because the church in which I live and have been called to write and speak has become more like the culture in these matters than counter to it. The enormous interest in “spirituality” these days is not accompanied by much, if any, interest in the long and intricate and daily business of formation in Christ—that is, the practice of the dispositions and habits of the heart that changes our word *spirituality* from a wish or a desire or a fantasy or a diversion into an actual life lived to the glory of God. A phrase from a Wendell Berry poem gives focus to what we're doing—“practice resurrection.” I'm going to anchor this book in the resurrection of Jesus.

RECOVERING OUR RESURRECTION CENTER

We live the Christian life out of a rich tradition of formation-by-resurrection. Jesus' resurrection provides the energy and conditions by which we “walk before the LORD in the land of the living”—the great psalm phrase (116:9). The resurrection of Jesus creates and then makes available the reality in which we are formed as new creatures in Christ by the Holy Spirit. The do-it-yourself, self-help culture of North America has so thoroughly permeated our imaginations that we ordinarily don't give attention to the biggest thing of all—resurrection. And the reason we don't is because resurrection is not something we can use or control or manipulate or improve on. It's interesting, isn't it, that the world has had very little success in commercializing Easter—turning it into a commodity—as it has Christmas? If we can't, in our phrase, “get a handle on it” or use it, we soon lose interest. But resurrection is not available for our use. It's exclusively God's operation.

What I want to do is recover our resurrection center and embrace the formation traditions that develop out of it. I'm going to deal in turn with three aspects of Jesus' resurrection that define and energize us as we enter the practice of resurrection lives. I will then set this resurrection life lived out of the reality and conditions of Jesus' resurrection in contrast to what I consider the common cultural habits and assumptions that are either oblivious to or make detours around resurrection. I will name this "the deconstruction of resurrection." Finally, I will suggest something of what is involved in cultivating the practice of resurrection: living appropriately and responsively in a world in which Christ is risen.

REVERENCE AND INTIMACY NEED EACH OTHER

Our four Gospel writers all complete their narrations of the gospel of Jesus with a story or stories of Jesus' resurrection. They come at it from different directions and provide different details, but one element is common to each of them: a sense of wonder, astonishment, surprise. Despite the several hints scattered throughout the Hebrew Scriptures and Jesus' three explicit statements forecasting his resurrection (see Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34), when it happened, it turned out that no one—no one—expected it. The first people involved in Jesus' resurrection were totally involved in dealing with his death. Now they had to do a complete about-face and deal with a life. As they did it, they were suffused with wonder.

Matthew gives us Mary Magdalene and a woman he names "the other Mary" making an early Sunday morning visit to the tomb in which on late Friday afternoon they had watched Joseph of Arimathea place Jesus' crucified body (see 28:1-10). As they approach the tomb, the ground suddenly shakes under their feet—an earthquake. This is followed by a blaze of lightning, which turns out to be an angel. The combination of earthquake and lightning puts the Roman soldiers who are guarding this tomb out of commission. Scared out of their wits, they sprawl on the ground in a dead faint.

But the two Marys stay on their feet and hear the angel address them personally with two phrases: "Do not be afraid" and "He has risen" (verses 5-6). The angel then gives them a message to be delivered to the disciples. They leave the site of the tomb, as ordered by the angel. Deep in wonder and full of joy, they are off on the run to share the news with the disciples. But then they are stopped in their tracks by a greeting: "Good morning!" (verse 9, MSG). They hear a welcome in the greeting and fall to their knees before the resurrected Jesus. Their first response to the risen Christ was to kneel in awed reverence. There was also an element of intimacy in that reverence, for they dared to touch and hold on to his feet: They "worshiped him" (verse 9).

The two elements together became worship. Falling to our knees before Jesus—an act of reverence—is not in itself resurrection worship. Touching and holding the feet of Jesus—an act of intimacy—is not in itself resurrection worship. The acts of reverence and intimacy need each other. The reverence needs the infusion of intimacy lest it become a cool and detached aesthetic. The intimacy needs to be suffused in reverence lest it become a gushy emotion. These women knew what they were doing: They were dealing with God in the living presence of Jesus, and so they worshiped.

Jesus then repeats the angel's earlier reassurance—"Do not be afraid"—and repeats the message to be delivered to the disciples. And that was it.

I love the contrast between those Roman guards—insensible and sprawled on the ground, paralyzed by fear—and the two exuberant women kneeling on the same ground, energized by fear. It's the same word in both cases—*fear*. But it's not the same thing. There is a fear that incapacitates us for dealing with God, and there is a fear that pulls us out of our preoccupation with ourselves, our feelings, or our circumstances into a world of wonder. It pulls us out of ourselves into the very action of God.

Day 39. Good Friday. April 10th, 2020.

Meditate and reflect on [Blessed Spirit \(Puritan Prayer\)](#) as sung by Stuart Townend. Listen to the song a couple of times leaving space in between to reflect and pray as the Lord leads you.

Blessèd Spirit of the King,
Of grace and love the author,
Work repentance deep within,
And bend me at Your altar.
Melt my heart with majesty,
Then show my ruined self to me;
Teach me to more clearly see
Your might and will to save me.

Here I place without reserve
My soul in faith and meekness,
Trusting in Christ's power and love
To flourish in my weakness.
Cause my days on earth to be
Through time and through eternity
A trophy of His victory,
A monument to mercy.

Teach me to behold my God,
And trust His power to save me,
Arms outstretched in constant love,
Whose strength will never fail me.
Help me to commune with Him,
Depend and follow after Him,
That through my life His peace will reign,
And joy be my companion.

(Music by Stuart Townend)

End by using this song as part of your prayer and consider these words throughout your day.

Contemplative Prayer

This is the ancient practice of opening our whole being – body, mind and spirit – to God’s abiding presence. It is quiet but active, restful but attentive, intentional but not goal-oriented. It is making real in our experience God’s love “poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 5:5). It requires patience. The fruit is often experienced outside of the practice itself. Just a physical exercise may be tough in the doing, and yet we carry the benefits with us through our day, so is contemplative (or centering) prayer. Have no goal in mind. It may feel like nothing has happened. Persevere. Showing up expresses a desire for God and He will respond. Silence is important. “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). There is a hearing and seeing beyond words as we open up our unconscious mind and the depth of our souls to God.

- “ Plan initially for 15-20 minutes. (Set a timer and then forget about the clock).
- “ Sit or kneel in a way that is neither too uncomfortable (distracts) or too comfortable (snoozy).
- “ Be in a quiet space without distractions.
- “ It may be helpful to have a ‘sacred’ object (cross, Bible, photo, icon, etc) in easy view. .

1. Choose a ‘sacred’ word or phrase.

- “ In a short time of prayer ask the Holy Spirit to give you a sacred word or phrase.
- “ Use one that readily comes to mind (don’t search for a “perfect” one). E.g. “good shepherd”, “grace”, “comforter”, “prince of peace”, “forgiven”, “with you always”, “Lamb of God” “joy”.

2. Softly speak your sacred word or phrase and then be still.

- “ Dwell in God’s presence.
- “ Fellowship is presence not talk. (Like enjoying a view with a friend.)

3. Abide. Let God’s presence touch you.

- “ Let normal thoughts and feelings come. Don’t try to ‘empty’ your mind, but don’t let a particular thought take over.
- “ Feel your soul letting go. (Do not go searching for thoughts or feelings.) Wait. Rest.
- “ Let Jesus lift any weight off your soul – fear, frustration, disappointment, desire, sadness, loneliness, anger, . . . Give it over. (Do not analyze, rationalize or sentimentalize.)
- “ Enjoy, don’t strive. Let joy and peace in. Smile at good thoughts and feelings.
- “ Let go of tightness in your face and body. Breathe rhythmically. Release your limbs. Let God’s peace spread to your neck, shoulders, arms, back, legs, ...
- “ If you doze, or your thoughts wander unhelpfully, return gently with your sacred word. (Don’t use it repetitively like a mantra.)
- “ If images crowd your mind look at your sacred object and slow your mind. Be attentive.
- “ Experience gentleness. Receive grace. (Like enjoying a gentle breeze, or the warmth of a bath.)

4. When the timer rings, end by thoughtfully praying the Lord’s Prayer.

If, therefore, they are servants of sin (II Cor. 3:17),
why do they boast of free will? ...
O, man! Learn from the precept what you ought to do;
learn from correction,
that it is your own fault you have not the power ...
Let human effort, which perished by Adam, here be silent,
and let the grace of God reign by Jesus Christ ...
What God promises,
we ourselves do not [do] through free will of human nature,
but He Himself does by grace within us ...
Men labour to find in our own will
something that is our own, and not God's;
how can they find it, I know not.

St Augustine of Hippo (34-430)

Compline

COMPOSE

Gather yourself from the busy-ness of the day.

Read the appointed *Psalm* (see next page – p. 167)

The Ignatian Examen:

CONSOLATION. A source of thanks and growth in God.

What was life-giving today?

When/where did you sense God's presence and work?

What refreshed, lifted and excited your soul?

What made God seem nearer?

DESOLATION. A basis for seeking the Spirit's comfort, repentance, re-orientation.

What was life-draining today?

When/where did you feel alone, far from God?

What was stressful, joyless, dark, fearful?

Was there evil or sin – mine or another's?

CONSIDER

READ ONE OR MORE OF THE APPOINTED LESSONS (see next page – p. 167)

Let these words challenge or affirm what you believe.

Let these words shed light on the choices you made today.

Let these words strengthen your convictions and change your approach to life.

CONNECT

Pray through what God has revealed to you and what is on your heart – thanksgiving, intercession, repentance.

Evening Lectionary

Day 1	Ash Wednesday	Feb 26 th	Psalm 51; Isaiah 1:10-18; Luke 15:11-22
Day 2	Thursday	Feb 26 th	Psalm 74; Jeremiah 2:14-32; John 4:1-26
Day 3	Friday	Feb 26 th	Psalm 31; Jeremiah 3:6-22; John 4:27-42
Day 4	Saturday	Feb 26 th	Psalm 73; Jeremiah 4:1-18; John 4:43-end
Day 5	Monday	Mar 1 st	Psalm 12, 13, 14; Jeremiah 4:19-end; John 5:1-18
Day 6	Tuesday	Mar 2 nd	Psalm 46, 49; Jeremiah 5:1-19; John 5:19-29
Day 7	Wednesday	Mar 3 rd	Psalm 9, 28; Jeremiah 5:20-end; John 5:30-end
Day 8	Thursday	Mar 4 th	Psalm 137, 138, 140; Jeremiah 6:9-21; John 6:1-15
Day 9	Friday	Mar 4 th	Psalm 54, 55; Jeremiah 6:22-end; John 6:16-27
Day 10	Saturday	Mar 4 th	Psalm 4, 16; Jeremiah 7:1-20; John 6:27-40
Day 11	Monday	Mar 4 th	Psalm 70, 74; Jeremiah 7:21-end; John 6:41-51
Day 12	Tuesday	Mar 4 th	Psalm 52, 53, 54; Jeremiah 8:1-15; John 6:52-59
Day 13	Wednesday	Mar 4 th	Psalm 3, 51; Jeremiah 8:18—9:1; John 6:60-end
Day 14	Thursday	Mar 4 th	Psalm 71; Jeremiah 9:12-24; John 7:1-13
Day 15	Friday	Mar 4 th	Psalm 6, 38; Jeremiah 10:1-16; John 7:14-24
Day 16	Saturday	Mar 4 th	Psalm 23, 27; Jeremiah 10:17-24; John 7:25-36
Day 17	Monday	Mar 4 th	Psalm 11, 17; Jeremiah 11:1-17; John 7:37-52
Day 18	Tuesday	Mar 4 th	Psalm 61, 62, 64; Jeremiah 11:18—12:6; John 7:53—8:11
Day 19	Wednesday	Mar 4 th	Psalm 36, 39; Jeremiah 13:1-11; John 8:12-30
Day 20	Thursday	Mar 4 th	Psalm 1, 112; Genesis 50:22-26; Matthew 2:13-23
Day 21	Friday	Mar 4 th	Psalm 69; Jeremiah 15:10-end; John 8:48-end
Day 22	Saturday	Mar 4 th	Psalm 116, 130; Jeremiah 16:10—17:4; John 9:1-17
Day 23	Monday	Mar 4 th	Psalm 25, 28; Jeremiah 17:5-18; John 9:18-end
Day 24	Tuesday	Mar 4 th	Psalm 85; Genesis 3:8-15; Colossians 4:1-5
Day 25	Wednesday	Mar 4 th	Psalm 131, 146; Isaiah 52:1-12; Hebrews 2:5-18
Day 26	Thursday	Mar 4 th	Psalm 94; Jeremiah 19:1-13; John 10:22-end
Day 27	Friday	Mar 4 th	Psalm 13, 16; Jeremiah 19:14—20:6; John 11:1-16
Day 28	Saturday	Mar 4 th	Psalm 140, 141, 142; Jeremiah 20:7-end; John 11:17-27
Day 29	Monday	Mar 4 th	Psalm 26, 27; Jeremiah 21:1-10; John 11:28-44
Day 30	Tuesday	Mar 4 th	Psalm 61, 64; Jeremiah 22:1-5, 13-19; John 11:45-end
Day 31	Wednesday	Apr 1 st	Psalm 56, 62; Jeremiah 22:20—23:8; John 12:1-11
Day 32	Thursday	Apr 2 nd	Psalm 42, 43; Jeremiah 23:9-32; John 12:12-19
Day 33	Friday	Apr 3 rd	Psalm 31; Jeremiah 24; John 12:20-36
Day 34	Saturday	Apr 4 th	Psalm 128, 129, 130; Jeremiah 25:1-14; John 12:36-end
Day 35	Monday	Apr 6 th	Psalm 25; Lamentations 2:8-19; Colossians 1:18-23
Day 36	Tuesday	Apr 7 th	Psalm 55:13-24; Lamentations 3:40-51; Galatians 6:11-18
Day 37	Wednesday	Apr 8 th	Psalm 88; Isaiah 63:1-9; Revelation 14:18—15:4
Day 38	Maundy Thursday	Apr 9 th	Psalm 39; Exodus 11; Ephesians 2:11-18
Day 39	Good Friday	Apr 10 th	Psalm 143; Lamentations 5:15-end; John 19:38-42
Day 40	Easter Saturday	Apr 11 th	Psalm 116; Job 19:21-27; 1 John 5:5-12

