



40 DAYS

A LENTEN JOURNEY

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HOW TO USE THIS DEVOTIONAL

During the season of Lent, we spend 40 days preparing for and focusing our hearts on the celebration of the Risen Christ. The 40 days refer to the days Jesus spent tempted in the desert. As the days lengthen and we practice fasting and repentance, we also want to take on a challenge together. Over the next 40 days, we hope you take this devotional as an opportunity to dive deep into scripture.

Each day's reading will have a portion of the larger text Dr. Chappell will preach from on the upcoming Sunday and a question to help you reflect personally or with others. We want you to take on the challenge to sit down with scripture daily, reflect, and pray about how God speaks in your life. You can do this as an independent challenge, with a group, with your spouse, kids, a coworker, or a friend at school; however you might feel called. We will provide space to check in and reflect at the end of each week.

Our great hope is that over this Lent season, you will create a routine of spending time in scripture each day as we seek to live and act like Jesus.

Following Christ,



The Discipleship Team



40 DAYS

A LENTEN JOURNEY

FEEL FREE TO WRITE IN
AND MARK UP
THIS DEVOTIONAL.

 <u>CONFUSED ABOUT</u>
<u>CONNECTED TO</u> 
Circle if you are CONFUSED. Underline if you CONNECTED.

If you are confused
about the scripture, circle it.

If you connect
with the verse then underline it.



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Seeking God

Scripture: Joel 2:1-2

Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sound the alarm on my holy hill
Let all who live in the land tremble,
for the day of the Lord is coming.
It is close at hand—
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and blackness.
Like dawn spreading across the mountains
a large and mighty army comes,
such as never was in ancient times
nor ever will be in ages to come.

Scripture: Joel 2:12-17

"Even now," declares the Lord,
"return to me with all your heart,
with fasting and weeping and mourning."
Rend your heart
and not your garments.
Return to the Lord your God,
for he is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and abounding in love,
and he relents from sending calamity.

Who knows? He may turn and relent
and leave behind a blessing—
grain offerings and drink offerings
for the Lord your God.

Blow the trumpet in Zion,
declare a holy fast,
call a sacred assembly.

Gather the people,
consecrate the assembly;
bring together the elders,
gather the children,
those nursing at the breast.

Let the bridegroom leave his room
and the bride her chamber.

Let the priests, who minister before the Lord,
weep between the portico and the altar.

Let them say, "Spare your people, Lord.

Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn,
a byword among the nations.

Why should they say among the peoples,
'Where is their God?'"



REFLECTION:

How can you seek God during this upcoming season?

How are you going to rend (tear in two) your heart or make room for God and others?

PRAYER:

God may I today begin a season of opening my heart to you. Empower me with your spirit to be constantly seeking you. Amen

Today I am praying for _____



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Temptation

Scripture: Matthew 4:1-4

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "*It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'*"

REFLECTION:

What do you think the word "temptation" means?

How have you been tempted this week?

How have you overcome temptations?

PRAYER:

Creator God, instill in me today the desire to seek you when I feel as though I am deep in the wilderness. Amen.

Today I am praying for _____



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Challenges

Scripture: Matthew 4:5-11

Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

REFLECTION:

After each temptation, Jesus quoted scripture. What verses from the Bible have you memorized?

How might memorizing scripture help you in challenging times like we see Jesus facing here?

This week your challenge is to memorize Deuteronomy 6:13.

Do you feel called to walk alongside individuals experiencing challenging times?

We encourage you to serve with Connecting Kindness, a ministry partner that provides for particularly vulnerable families in need. Volunteers serve on-site, build relationships, and provide needed goods for this community.

Contact Yenín Echeverría at yecheverria@bumc.net to get connected or visit connectingkindness.org.

PRAYER:

God, thank you for your loyalty, always coming after me, and giving me the example of Jesus. Today may I follow in his footsteps. Amen.

Today I am praying for _____



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Weekly Check-In

Take a moment to sit quietly, clear your head, and be present.

Once you have taken a moment, prayerfully meditate and finish these statements yourself.

This week I felt God's presence when...

This week I saw heaven on earth in...

This week when I read _____ I felt comforted.

This week while reading scripture, I learned...

This week I prayed for...



MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27

Born Again

Scripture: John 3:1-3

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him." Jesus replied, *"Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."*

REFLECTION:

What do you think Jesus means by the phrase "born again?"

In what ways are you seeking to change and grow during this Lent season?

PRAYER:

God, today may I see your Kingdom all around me. May I be a person who spreads the love and grace that you taught us through your Son. Amen.

Today I am praying for _____



TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28

Spirit Gives Birth to Spirit

Scripture: John 3:4-7

"How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!" Jesus answered, *"Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to Spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'*

REFLECTION:

Sometimes Jesus surprises us with his teachings. For Nicodemus, it was about being born again. What about Jesus' teachings and life surprises or challenges you?

PRAYER:

God, thank you for being willing to come and teach us through Jesus. Today, open my eyes to how you might be teaching me to live.

Today I am praying for _____



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1

The Spirit of God

Scripture: John 3:8

The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

REFLECTION:

Here, Jesus explains to Nicodemus that you don't always understand everything about the wind, but you can easily see its effects. The Spirit of God is like the wind: we can't always see God moving in our lives, but we know God is there.

What is something you don't quite comprehend about God or your faith?

PRAYER: BREATH PRAYER

Breath prayer is a form of contemplative prayer linking the rhythms of breathing and scripture or prayer. An example of this would be to breathe in "Lord Jesus" and breathe out "Have mercy on me."

Repeat as the prayer frees your mind to flow into your heart.

Today I am praying for _____



THURSDAY, MARCH 2

Believe

Scripture: John 3:9-15

"How can this be?" Nicodemus asked. "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him."

REFLECTION:

Have you encountered an exceptionally spiritual person or found yourself in an extraordinary situation before God, where you are so transformed that you take a new identity as if you had been born again? Do you know of someone who has?

Truth in faith was hard for first-century believers, as it is for us today. They wanted proof, physical evidence, that the Son of Man was God's Savior. But faith is truth without the necessity for physical evidence.

PRAYER:

God, give me eyes to see you today in the world around me. Give me the openness to allow your presence to transform my life. Amen

Today I am praying for _____



FRIDAY, MARCH 3

Eternal Life

Scripture: John 3:16-17

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

REFLECTION:

Verse 16 is one of the most famous verses in all of the Bible.

Why do you think it gives so many people comfort and encouragement?

Today, what about these verses comforts you?

**This week, we want to challenge you to memorize these verses.
Children: recite them to a BUMC staff member and get a treat!**

Do you feel called to share the love of God with kids who are longing for love and care?

We encourage you to serve with Harvest Hands, a ministry birthed from Brentwood United Methodist Church. This ministry serves more than 150 under-resourced kids in South Nashville. They need tutors, readers, and coach volunteers for their after school and sports league programs.

Contact Yenín Echeverría at yecheverria@bumc.net to get connected, or visit harvesthandscdc.com.

PRAYER:

God, thank you for loving me in a way that saves me. Today when I struggle, remind me of the deep love you have for me, and may it bring me hope. Amen.

Today I am praying for _____



SATURDAY, MARCH 4

Weekly Check-In

Take a moment to sit quietly, clear your head, and be present.

Once you have taken a moment, prayerfully meditate and finish these statements yourself.

This week I felt God's presence when...

This week I saw heaven on earth in...

This week when I read _____ I felt comforted.

This week while reading scripture, I learned...

This week I prayed for...



MONDAY, MARCH 6

Jesus Loves All

Scripture: John 4:5-9

So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "*Will you give me a drink?*" (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

REFLECTION:

Who did you feel you could not associate with growing up?

What were the reasons?

Who do you avoid or feel uncomfortable around today?

Why do we tend to do this at times?

PRAYER:

Loving God, give me eyes to see others today as you see them: your beloveds. Call me today to interact with everyone I meet through the lens of knowing they are each your child.

Today I am praying for _____



TUESDAY, MARCH 7

Living Water

Scripture: John 4:10-14

Jesus answered her, *"If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."* "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?" Jesus answered, *"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

REFLECTION:

Here, Jesus talks about a deep spiritual thirst we all have. What are those things that you thirst for deep inside?

Like water satisfies the body, a relationship with Jesus satisfies the soul. In what ways could you help point others to Jesus or draw near to him yourself?

PRAYER:

Loving God, may I feel the deep desire you have to fill me with your love and peace even in chaos. Amen.

Today I am praying for _____



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8

Worship in Spirit and in Truth

Scripture: John 4:15-24

The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true." "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is Spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

REFLECTION:

The woman from the well experienced barriers to worshipping God. What are some barriers in your life that prevent you from fully worshipping?

What is worship and where can it happen?

PRAYER:

God, instill in me a desire to worship you when I feel overwhelmed or frustrated. When I feel I have no time or am in a hurry, remind me to take a moment to slow down and give you thanks. Amen.

Today I am praying for _____



THURSDAY, MARCH 9

I Am He

Scripture: John 4:25-38

The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." Then Jesus declared, *"I, the one speaking to you—I am he."* Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?" Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" They came out of the town and made their way toward him. Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, *"I have food to eat that you know nothing about."* Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?" *"My food,"* said Jesus, *"is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor."*

Here, when Jesus talks about the "harvest," he's speaking metaphorically about people ready to be received into the Kingdom of God. He says that the disciples should see themselves as reapers – people who collect food from the fields they didn't necessarily plant.

REFLECTION:

Today, how can you live out Jesus' command to make disciples for the transformation of the world?

Who helped you become a disciple?

PRAYER:

God, today I likely will mess up and not be a perfect follower of your Son. Remind me of your grace, and may it humble me. Remind me of the call to live and act like your Son. Amen

Today I am praying for _____



FRIDAY, MARCH 10

Savior of the World

Scripture: John 4:39-42

Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers. They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

Do you feel called to reach beyond cultural barriers and actively love your neighbor?

We encourage you to serve with Nashville Neighbors, a ministry partner that provides a warm welcome and support to newly arrived refugees. We have a team at Brentwood United Methodist Church that walks alongside individual families and would love your help.

Contact Yenín Echeverría at yecheverria@bumc.net to get connected or visit siloamhealth.org.

REFLECTION:

What about the larger story of the Samaritan woman and her encounter with Jesus stands out to you?

Is it her faith, transformation, or sharing with others?

Is it Jesus' willingness to cross barriers to meet her, his knowledge of her life, and his acceptance of her? Or something else?

PRAYER:

God, thank you that, just as Jesus loved the Samaritan woman, you love me. May my faith and life reflect such a deep love from you today. Amen.

Today I am praying for _____



SATURDAY, MARCH 11

Weekly Check-In

Take a moment to sit quietly, clear your head, and be present.

Once you have taken a moment, prayerfully meditate and finish these statements yourself.

This week I felt God's presence when...

This week I saw heaven on earth in...

This week when I read _____ I felt comforted.

This week while reading scripture, I learned...

This week I prayed for...



MONDAY, MARCH 13

Light of the World

Scripture: John 9:1-6

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" *"Neither this man nor his parents sinned,"* said Jesus, *"but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."* After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes.

REFLECTION:

The disciples blamed the man's blindness upon his or his parent's sin. How does Jesus challenge this idea?

How would you have challenged this idea?

PRAYER:

God, empower me today to be a light in the darkness. Help me to be someone who seeks to show people their great worth rather than pick at their imperfections. Remind me of my great worth even amid my imperfections. Amen.

Today I am praying for _____



TUESDAY, MARCH 14

I Don't Know

Scripture: John 9:7-12

"Go," he told him, "*wash in the Pool of Siloam*" (this word means "Sent"). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only looks like him." But he himself insisted, "I am the man." "How then were your eyes opened?" they asked. He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see." "Where is this man?" they asked him. "I don't know," he said.

REFLECTION:

When we are asked, "How did you change?" after we start following Jesus, our only answer – like the blind man – is, "I don't know." This is because, ultimately, we aren't changed by what we do but by what Jesus has done for us – as we obey.

What might Jesus be calling you to do today?

PRAYER:

God, humble me so I would be willing to obey you and your love. I know that doing this will change the way I experience the world and how I care for those around me. Open my heart to where you might be calling me. Amen.

Today I am praying for _____



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15

He is a Prophet

Scripture: John 9:13-18

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others asked, "How can a sinner perform such signs?" So they were divided. Then they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened." The man replied, "He is a prophet." They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents.

REFLECTION:

The church's top leaders, the Pharisees, were so divided over the man's healing that they had to call witnesses, ask questions, and research instead of just believing.

Why do you believe, even though you can't always see Jesus at work?

Why do we tend to be like the Pharisees and want "proof"?

PRAYER:

God, as I go about my day today, remind me that you are all around me. Thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit that surrounds me in this moment and throughout my day. You desire to be with me in Spirit, so may I also be on the lookout for you in my life. Amen.

Today I am praying for _____



THURSDAY, MARCH 16

God at Work

Scripture: John 9:19-34

"Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?" "We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind. But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God by telling the truth," they said. "We know this man is a sinner." He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered, "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?" Then they hurled insults at him and said, "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from." The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out.

REFLECTION:

It was easier for the religious leaders to believe that the man was never blind. There are many times in our lives when it's easier to believe that luck or timing was at work instead of God. Look back today and think about how you've seen God at work in your life.

PRAYER:

God, in times of doubt or confusion, forgive me. Remind me of the amazing ways you have been present to me and instill in me comfort rooted in your deep desire to call me beloved. Amen

Today I am praying for _____



FRIDAY, MARCH 17

Lord, I Believe

Scripture: John 9:35-41

Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, *"Do you believe in the Son of Man?"* "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." Jesus said, *"You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you."* Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. Jesus said, *"For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind."* Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?" Jesus said, *"If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains."*

Do you feel called to attend to the physical and spiritual brokenness in our world?

We encourage you to support South Africa Outreach, a ministry birthed from Brentwood United Methodist Church. You can sponsor a student and join our congregation in supporting our partner schools that serve more than 400 students who receive an education, nutrition, safety, and healthcare because of your support.

Contact Yenín Echeverría at yecheverria@bumc.net to get connected or visit bumc.net/southafrica.

REFLECTION:

As Jesus heals the blind man, he also uses the idea of blindness in a symbolic sense in his conversation with the Pharisees. Those who cannot see the light and truth of God, Jesus says, are spiritually blind.

Where are you spiritually blind in your own life?

Where have you maybe missed God at work in your life?

PRAYER:

God may I today begin a season of opening my heart to you. Empower me with your spirit to be constantly seeking you. Amen

Today I am praying for _____



SATURDAY, MARCH 18

Weekly Check-In

Take a moment to sit quietly, clear your head, and be present.

Once you have taken a moment, prayerfully meditate and finish these statements yourself.

This week I felt God's presence when...

This week I saw heaven on earth in...

This week when I read _____ I felt comforted.

This week while reading scripture, I learned...

This week I prayed for...



MONDAY, MARCH 20

For God's Glory

Scripture: John 11:1-10

Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick." When he heard this, Jesus said, *"This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it."* Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, and then he said to his disciples, *"Let us go back to Judea."* "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?" Jesus answered, *"Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world's light. It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light."*

REFLECTION:

Jesus was willing to enter dangerous situations out of his love for others. What are you willing to do out of love for others today?

Here we are with another symbol of light giving life. Do you struggle to see this light when danger, worry, or fear overwhelms you?

PRAYER:

God, equip me today to be a light for others. May I show others that you love them and that they are important to your Kingdom. When I struggle to see and feel my worth, remind me of the love you have for me. Amen.

Today I am praying for _____



TUESDAY, MARCH 21

So That You May Believe

Scripture: John 11:11-17

After he had said this, he went on to tell them, *"Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up."* His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. So then he told them plainly, *"Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."* Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.

REFLECTION:

How do you think Lazarus' friends and family felt during those four days without Jesus?

How have you experienced grief and loss?

How do you think they felt when Jesus showed up after Lazarus had died?

Could they have felt he showed up "too late"?

PRAYER:

God, where there is grief and sadness in the world, where there is grief and sadness in me, remind us of the joy and hope of resurrection.

May I be confident that you bring hope and joy where there is sadness. Amen.

Today I am praying for _____



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22

The Resurrection and the Life

Scripture: John 11:18-27

Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." Jesus said to her, "*Your brother will rise again.*" Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "*I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?*" "Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

REFLECTION:

When we lose something we love, our community rallies around us, and Jesus tells us that there is something better, even if we cannot see it yet.

What's something you've lost?

How does Jesus' resurrection power connect with your loss and give you hope?

What does it mean for us to claim Jesus as the Messiah? How does that speak to our hope for resurrection?

PRAYER:

God, today through my actions and words, may I point others toward Jesus, my savior. Remind me of the great length you have gone to show me I am worth loving and saving. Amen.

Today I am praying for _____



THURSDAY, MARCH 23

Heartbreak

Scripture: John 11:28-37

After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. "The Teacher is here," she said, "and is asking for you." When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there. When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in Spirit and troubled. "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

REFLECTION:

Jesus sees our suffering and hurt and is deeply moved by it all. His heart breaks for what breaks ours. What breaks your heart?

How can you bring comfort to others?

What does it mean for you to see Jesus be human and show such emotion?

PRAYER:

God, thank you for coming in human flesh, for knowing what it is like to be us. When I struggle today, remind me that Jesus walked on earth so I would have an example and feel amazing grace. Amen.

Today I am praying for _____



FRIDAY, MARCH 24

See the Glory of God

Scripture: John 11:38-45

Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. *"Take away the stone,"* he said. "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days." Then Jesus said, *"Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"* So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, *"Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."* When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, *"Lazarus, come out!"* The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, *"Take off the grave clothes and let him go."* Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Do you feel called to help others find a life-giving welcome and respite for the journey?

We encourage you to serve with Room In The Inn, a homeless ministry that shelters guests on our campus during the winter months. Sunday School classes, small groups, and individuals sign up to provide two hot meals for our guests, serve as hospitality, or provide needed goods.

Contact Yenín Echeverría at yecheverria@bumc.net to get connected or visit roomintheinn.org.

REFLECTION:

Jesus has the power to raise Lazarus from the dead, and his power is able to work in your life as well. What unimaginable thing could you pray for today?

Jesus asks the crowd to help Lazarus take off his grave clothes. Lazarus needed his community to help him get rid of his old life. What in our lives do we need to unravel (or need help unraveling) to move on?

Like Lazarus's community helped him, how do you need your community today?

PRAYER:

God, remind me that we are called to live this life in community, to care for one another. Put people in my path that I can love and remind me to seek a community where I am loved. Amen.

Today I am praying for _____



SATURDAY, MARCH 25

Weekly Check-In

Take a moment to sit quietly, clear your head, and be present.

Once you have taken a moment, prayerfully meditate and finish these statements yourself.

This week I felt God's presence when...

This week I saw heaven on earth in...

This week when I read _____ I felt comforted.

This week while reading scripture, I learned...

This week I prayed for...



MONDAY, MARCH 27

Are You The King?

Scripture: Matthew 27:11-18

Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "You have said so," Jesus replied. When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?" But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor. Now it was the governor's custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus Barabbas. So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him.

REFLECTION:

When you picture a King, what comes to mind? How does Jesus' ministry challenge your ideas about how a king should act?

Like Pilate, we often let our self-interest drive our hearts, which can lead to hurt or disappointment. How can we let Christ be our main focus or motive when making big decisions?

Write down three things you need Jesus' help in making decisions.

PRAYER:

God, today help me discern. May I feel your spirit comfort and guide me as I consider big decisions and callings in my life. Thank you for being my comforter and guide. Amen.

Today I am praying for _____



TUESDAY, MARCH 28

Crucify Him

Scripture: Matthew 27:19-26

While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him." But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed. "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor. "Barabbas," they answered. "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify him!" "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!" When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!" All the people answered, "His blood is on us and on our children!" Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

REFLECTION:

Here, Barrabas – a guilty man – is set free since Jesus – an innocent man – is set to be crucified in his place. This type of exchange is at the heart of the Gospel. What sins has Jesus forgiven in you?

Where have you seen Jesus' forgiveness this week?

Although things seem unfair in this situation, what does Jesus do when people accuse or condemn him?

What does this say as to the nature of God's being?

PRAYER:

God, call me to live into the forgiveness you have provided me. Call me to show grace and forgiveness to others even when it is hard. Amen.

Today I am praying for _____



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29

Hail, King of the Jews!

Scripture: Matthew 27:27-37

Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him. As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. They came to a place called Golgotha (which means "the place of the skull"). There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS .

REFLECTION:

Reread this passage slowly. Sometimes we like to rush past this painful scene. Look again at the pain endured on the cross because of Jesus' love for all people. Write down painful emotions you might feel.

PRAYER:

God, thank you for enduring the pain and weight of my sin. Today, call me to be humbled by the great length you have gone to show your immense love for me and all of humanity. Amen.

Today I am praying for _____



THURSDAY, MARCH 30

Save Yourself!

Scripture: Matthew 27:38-49

Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!" In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him. From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"). When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "He's calling Elijah." Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. The rest said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him."

REFLECTION:

We try to fix situations that make us feel less than, lonely, or abandoned. Yet, when we sit in these moments, they teach us more about where we turn to in times of need. What small moment can you practice turning to God today so you can be ready when more significant moments come?

Why do you think Jesus chose not to save himself?

PRAYER:

God, it is easy for me to feel like I can do everything on my own, to take on all the weight myself. Remind me today that you call me to turn to you in all situations, good and bad. Amen.

Today I am praying for _____



FRIDAY, MARCH 31

The Earth Shook

Scripture: Matthew 27:50-54

And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his Spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people. When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!"

Do you feel called to share the Gospel story of redemption in word and deed?

We encourage you to serve with Healing Housing, a ministry birthed from Brentwood United Methodist Church. This ministry shelters women finding freedom from addiction, abuse, homelessness, and other challenging situations.

Contact Yenín Echeverría at ycheverria@bumc.net to get connected, or visit healinghousing.org.

REFLECTION:

The curtain is torn. There are dead people raised to life. And there is an earthquake. What do you think these events, which happened at Jesus' death, are pointing to?

With Jesus' sacrifice and the temple curtain torn, we should have nothing separating us from God. What in your life is separating you from God?

PRAYER:

God, thank you for your desire to tear away any boundary that separates us. God, give me eyes to see how I try to distance myself from you and encourage me to rid myself of those distractions. Amen.

Today I am praying for _____



SATURDAY, APRIL 1

Weekly Check-In

Take a moment to sit quietly, clear your head, and be present.

Once you have taken a moment, prayerfully meditate and finish these statements yourself.

This week I felt God's presence when...

This week I saw heaven on earth in...

This week when I read _____ I felt comforted.

This week while reading scripture, I learned...

This week I prayed for...



MONDAY, APRIL 3

They Have Taken The Lord

Scripture: John 20:1-2

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

REFLECTION:

How do you think Mary Magdalene felt both walking to the tomb and then walking towards the disciples to tell them?

How do you think Simon Peter and John felt running towards the tomb?

When Mary Magdalene saw the empty tomb, her first reaction was to think Jesus' body had been stolen. She wasn't wishing for or anticipating the resurrection of Jesus. How often do we forget to anticipate or hope in God, even after the resurrection?

PRAYER:

God, remind me of the power of the resurrection. May it change me to my innermost being. Today, call me to tell others of my great hope in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Today I am praying for _____



TUESDAY, APRIL 4

He Saw and Believed

Scripture: John 20:3-10

So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

REFLECTION:

As John enters the tomb, he sees the unique display of neatly laid cloths and linens, and he immediately believes. John doesn't have to meet Jesus like the others; he sees the miracle and knows what God has done. Looking back at your life, where can you see and believe in the miracles God has done for you?

PRAYER:

God, remind me of the power of the resurrection. May it change me to my innermost being. Today, remind me of the many ways you have shown up in my life and performed a great miracle. Amen.

Today I am praying for _____



WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5

They Have Taken My Lord Away

Scripture: John 20:11-13

Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him."

REFLECTION:

Angels were present at Jesus' birth, during his ministry, and at the empty tomb. They always carry important messages from God. Have you ever encountered an angel and received a message from God in your life?

To Mary, Jesus is her best friend. Have you ever had your best friend or a special relationship broken or stolen from you in a way beyond your control? Imagine the anger and confusion Mary must feel in this moment with the context of the days behind her.

PRAYER:

God, remind me of the power of the resurrection. May it change me to my innermost being. May I seek reconciliation even in difficult situations. Amen.

Today I am praying for _____



THURSDAY, APRIL 6

Rabboni!

Scripture: John 20:14-16

At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. He asked her, "*Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?*" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Jesus said to her, "*Mary.*" She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").

REFLECTION:

If this were the gardener, that gardener would have called her by a more formal Mary Magdalene of Magdala, but Jesus knew Mary's name as a close friend. He knows your name, too. Remember today that Jesus created you, loves you, and is always for you.

No matter our bargaining or pleading when we are at our lowest, Jesus calls us by name. When has Jesus called you back into His arms?

PRAYER:

God, remind me of the power of the resurrection. May it change me to my innermost being. May I be reminded that you know me personally and love me deeply. Amen.

Today I am praying for _____



FRIDAY, APRIL 7

I Have Seen the Lord.

Scripture: John 20:17-18

Jesus said, *"Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father.*

Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your

Father, to my God and your God." Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with

the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

REFLECTION:

Mary Magdalene went just as Jesus told her. How can we be like Mary Magdalene in our everyday lives?

Jesus also calls us in Matthew 28:18-20 to go and share the good news with others. How can we share the joy we experience in hearing and knowing the good news with our communities?

This Easter, who could you invite to join you as we worship the resurrected Christ?

PRAYER:

God, remind me of the power of the resurrection. May it change me to my innermost being. Empower me to share the great love I have experienced in a relationship with you. Call me to be someone who constantly points toward your Son.

Today I am praying for _____



SATURDAY, APRIL 8

Weekly Check-In

Take a moment to sit quietly, clear your head, and be present.

Once you have taken a moment, prayerfully meditate and finish these statements yourself.

This week I felt God's presence when...

This week I saw heaven on earth in...

This week when I read _____ I felt comforted.

This week while reading scripture, I learned...

This week I prayed for...



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