

March 2 – Day 1

Luke 4:1-15

JESUS UNDERSTANDS YOUR WEAKNESS

DEVOTION

Temptation! We all face it and we all have to learn how to resist and overcome. In our scripture for today we read that even Jesus was tempted by the devil. In fact, the scriptures assure us that Jesus was tempted in every way, just like we are, and yet he did not sin. Because Jesus was tempted just like we are, he is able to sympathize with us in our weakness. This empathy actually causes him to pray and intercede for us. Imagine that - Jesus, the Son of God, is right now at the right hand of the Father praying for you.

According to 1 John 2:16 there are three main categories of temptation. These are the same three areas in which Jesus was tempted:

- a) Sinful cravings of the flesh – Jesus was tempted to give in to the hunger of his flesh by abusing his power and turning stones into bread.
- b) Lust of the eyes – the devil showed Jesus the splendor and glory of the kingdoms of this world and tempted him to gain all of this by following the devil's plan instead of God's plan for his life.
- c) Pride of life – Jesus was tempted to exalt himself and put God to the test by assuming that God would save him if he jumped off the highest point of the temple.

Jesus was indeed tempted in every way, just like we are, and he understands our weaknesses. But he also set the example for us by overcoming and resisting every temptation. He wants to help us to do the same. So, the next time you're tempted by the devil, why not take a moment to pray and ask Jesus to help you overcome, just like he did.

FOR REFLECTION

- What holds you back from trusting God; what are the areas of your life where fear or unbelief hinders you in your discipleship?
- How can you appreciate more fully the wonder of the salvation he brings?
- What desperate needs could you bring to Jesus today?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank you that you understand my weaknesses. When you were on this earth you were tempted in every way, just like I am. Yet, you overcame. You resisted the temptation and did not sin. Please forgive me for those times when I have not resisted but given in to temptation and sinned against you. I ask you to help me to overcome the next time I am tempted. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen!

March 3 – Day 2

Luke 4:16-30

THAT IS TODAY

DEVOTION

In recent years of rapid development in technology and telecommunication, almost everyone owns a mobile phone. People can communicate with each other anytime, anywhere. However, back in the years when mobile phones were not so popular, people had to wait until they got home from school or work to use their phones. Waiting was inevitable. Likewise, the Israelites had to spend years of waiting to celebrate the Year of Jubilee, which only came once every fifty years! To those under oppression, poverty and captivity, the Year of Jubilee which signified freedom and deliverance would bring them the hope of life. Jesus was exactly in this situation where people in society were oppressed and they were longing for change. Jesus proclaimed to the people at that time: the prophecy of Isaiah has come true! To every follower of Jesus, there is no longer the need to wait for decades to be free because the moment they are willing to accept Jesus and believe in him, the blessings of the Year of Jubilee will come upon them and their spirit will be freed from captivity!

The Year of Jubilee is no longer once in fifty years. It is anytime, anywhere, as long as you are willing!

FOR REFLECTION

- Is there anything that hinders you from receiving the blessings of the Year of Jubilee?
- How can you act out or reveal the blessings and fulfillment of the Year of Jubilee in your community or group?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for establishing the Year of Jubilee. Thank you also for letting Jesus come to this world, to bring forth the blessings of the Year of Jubilee into people's lives, anytime, anywhere. Give us a willing heart to receive the blessings of the Year of Jubilee promised by Jesus; and also give us strength to share these blessings among people around us. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

March 4 – Day 3

Luke 5:1-32

MEET MY BEST NEW FRIEND!

DEVOTION

Given an option, many of us would not enjoy being with ‘questionable’ characters or sinners, let alone dine or fellowship with them. Would such association taint our reputation? What good would it do? Such people are set in their ways. They won’t listen to me anyway! We tend not only to shun ‘obvious’ sinners, but also those who do not share our core values and convictions, or are not ‘religiously correct’.

When I was little, I learned this Chinese proverb: 近朱者赤，近墨者黑 – if you draw near the light, you become light; if you draw near the dark, you become dark, i.e. stay away from the bad guys. But here we see Jesus asking a questionable character to follow him. In turn, Levi invites a whole gang of despicable tax collectors and sinners to meet his new best friend. What a great uproar this caused among the pious Pharisees!

Jesus saw beyond the crusty exteriors of Levi and his like. He perceived a glimmer in them that wanted to break free from darkness but did not know how. Carrying overflowing forgiveness, abundant grace and mercy, the Light of the World sought out the woman at the well -- a notorious woman, perhaps like today’s Heidi Fleiss? Jesus called Zacchaeus to descend from the tree. Was he in some ways like today’s Bernard Madoff, the all-time scammer? Were we not all once called out of darkness into the light?

FOR REFLECTION

- What are the ways you can reveal the light of Christ in your work, home, with friends?
- How can we discern when and how to confront darkness in others? When we do, how do we ensure that we love enough to do so effectively and strong enough not to be pushed backed ourselves?

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, thank you for calling me out of darkness into your incredible light. I confess some darkness still lingers in me. Forgive me. I have often succumbed to passivity and not stood up for you before mockers and slanderers. Keep me strong so that your light in me will overcome the darkness in them. Help me draw near to you, so that more and more of your light will flood my being. Open my eyes to see those around me who are yearning to come into your light. Amen.

March 5 – Day 4

Luke 5:33- 6:16

CHANGING CULTURES

DEVOTION

I was able to discuss the topic of ‘changing cultures’ with two university students over the course of lunch and dinner one day. They were eager to express the view that Hong Kong needs change. However, they agreed that even their own generation is becoming indifferent to it because change is not something that people like, especially when it doesn’t directly concern them. It seems like nothing much has changed since Jesus confronted the Pharisees about the change that he was bringing into the world. He did not come to just ‘patch things up’ but intended to establish a completely new way of living. It wasn’t about bringing in more man-made requirements (such as the requirement of the Pharisees to fast twice a week), but a radically free life that will also fulfill the law.

Demanding change is easy but it is a lot harder when we have to experience it ourselves. However, a change led by God will always lead us to a better place!

FOR REFLECTION

- What are some things that you would like to change in your life over this Lent season?
- Pastor Bill Hybels suggested the use of a 6x6 card method (our top 6 priorities in the next 6 weeks) to bring a godly focus to our lives.
- What are some of your top 6 ‘priorities for change’?

PRAYER

Father God, thank you for creating me and molding me to be more like you. Please give me wisdom and strength as I go through the changes that you would like to see in me.

May your will be my will, no matter how difficult it may seem. I know that you will always lead me to a closer relationship with you. In Jesus’ name, Amen!

Day 5 – March 6**Luke 6:17-26**

IN THAT DAY

DEVOTION

There is an ancient Chinese saying: ‘one kind of rice nurtures a hundred kinds of men’. Gastronomy aside, the same can be said of the Church—and perhaps increasingly so. In his famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus distinguishes two types of disciples marked by very different traits. Both feed from the same grain of faith, yet lead disparate lives characterized by dissimilar goals, values, and motives.

The first group pursues the will of God with reckless abandon and embraces poverty, hunger and insults for the sake of the gospel. Forsaking worldly comforts, these believers grieve over the lost generation. They live not for momentary delights, but have their sights on heaven--where ‘in that day’, their joy shall be eternal. Jesus identifies this group as the prophets, for they live by truth and faithfulness. The second group is driven by the present needs of life - striving for material riches, earthly comforts and popular approval. To this group, Jesus warns of a day when they will lose their rights to comforts and heavenly rewards, comparing them to the ‘false prophets’ who live according to worldly standards and skewed philosophies of life.

FOR REFLECTION

Which type of disciple are you? Are you striving for success in this present life or for the new world to come?
What are the things that hinder you from turning your life towards the kingly reign of God?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, please give me your vision for this present life, one that you have prepared for me long before the creation of this world. Help me to clear away any hindrances, such that my life may bear witness to your truth. Amen.

Day 6 – March 7**Luke 6:27-49**

KINGDOM LIVING

DEVOTION

Jesus seems to give some of his most challenging teaching when the crowds are the largest. Jesus asks them, ‘Are you willing to listen?’ He then dishes out some of the hardest to follow teaching in the Bible. This teaching runs counter to almost everything being taught in the world. It certainly isn’t easy to live out. These verses make me uncomfortable, because I know I often fall short. It’s so easy to put myself first instead of others.

Thankfully, in those moments when we get it right, we also know the reward this type of living can bring. I guess that’s the point. Living in the kingdom requires more than just words, more than just attitudes – Jesus also cares about our actions. How we treat others really does matter.

FOR REFLECTION

- Which part of this passage is the most challenging for you to live out?
- Pray for a heart that is willing to listen and invite the Holy Spirit into the details of your life.
- How might the Spirit be nudging you to action today?

PRAYER

Lord, may my heart be open to your leading, guide me to the places where I struggle to put others first, strengthen me to love others as you love me. Amen.

Day 7 – March 8 Luke 7:1-10

LORD, BUT JUST SAY YOUR WORD

DEVOTION

Living in this world gives us many problems, troubles and difficulties that we must break through. Sometimes coping with them is far beyond our ability. We all need help from our Lord Jesus for those problems in our life. However, we do not give our Lord a chance to say his word. Of course, we pray but we need to listen to what he says. In this world we lead such complicated lives and are so busy that we often cannot hear his voice. We try to speak to the Lord through our prayers. We keep saying our words.

It is time for us to let the Lord say his word. Faith must be simple like that of the centurion in today's scripture. We have to listen carefully and in a focused way to the Lord.

If Jesus says his word it will be done. Let us cut off all the unnecessary branches of our life so that we can bear much fruit. Let us stay tuned on the channel of Jesus. Let the Lord say his word about our life problems. There is the solution. Be absolutely positive.

FOR REFLECTION

- Who are the people, or what issues do we need to bring before the Lord today?
- What is God saying to you this Lent about the ways you could make evident your faith in him?

PRAYER

Thank you gracious God, that you hear our prayer. You know our situation. Speak your Word to us now and when we hear that word grant us faith to follow, to act in obedience to your call. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Day 8 – March 9

Luke 7:11-17

COMPASSION

DEVOTION

The week I found out I was not able to father children was without a doubt the worst week of my life. It felt like all my hopes, dreams, and desires for my future were over. Out of all the moments of struggle and pain that week, one event stands out the most. A friend from my seminary class came into my office, knelt with me and wept. He didn't try to offer any empty words of positivity or a fake smile to cheer me up. He just understood my pain and met me in it. I was struck by the emotion that he was exhibiting; though it was only later I was able to put a name to it. It's called compassion.

The story of Jesus raising the widow's son in Nain is one of Luke's most powerful stories of compassion. Jesus enters the town at the same time a widow and large crowd of mourners are proceeding out towards the final burial place of her only son. Jesus literally walks straight into the worst day of this poor mother's life. Luke tells us 'his heart went out to her', and out of this compassion he does three things – he speaks comfort to her, acts to change her situation, and restores her joy. Jesus changes everything simply because his heart was moved. This is the wonderful power and awe of our God, that he holds the whole universe in his hands and yet still has time to care deeply for his people - to meet us in our need.

FOR REFLECTION

- Perhaps there is a situation in your life right now where you need Jesus to walk straight in, meet you in it, turn towards you in compassion, and change everything. He may not say what you expect, or do exactly what you want, but if his presence comes to be with you in the midst of your situation, that is what you need most.
- His presence in Nain changed everything, and his presence in your 'Nain' can do the same. He can reach out and touch the coffin of what is dead in your life, and revive it afresh.

PRAYER

Gracious Father, I thank you that you are forever compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. May I know more and more each day that wonderful peace of your abiding presence in my life. In Jesus name, Amen.

Day 9 – March 10**Luke 7:18-35**

ARE YOU THE ONE WHO WAS TO COME?

DEVOTION

Christianity has often had an uneasy relationship with doubt. Sometimes it has been thought to be ‘unspiritual’ or the enemy of true faith. But here we may take great comfort from the fact that even John the Baptist was not always sure about Jesus’ identity. He sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus, ‘Are you the one who was to come or should we expect someone else?’

Jesus’ response pointed them to the evidence that he was indeed the long-awaited deliverer of God’s people. Alluding to the prophet Isaiah (35:5-6) he reminded them that ‘The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.’ This reminds us that the opposite of faith is not doubt but unbelief. When we doubt, the antidote that Jesus prescribes is to look again at the evidence for who he is. The blind did receive their sight. The dead were raised. And so we can be sure that Jesus is who he said he was – the one worthy of all our worship, devotion and love. Will we believe the evidence that Jesus gives?

FOR REFLECTION

- What doubts do you have at the moment?
- What role should evidence play in our faith?
- How can the evidence for who Jesus is give us confidence in our evangelism?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the example of Jesus who reassured those who doubted. In the midst of our doubts, please help us to be honest and to remember the evidence for who Jesus is. May we never harden our hearts and turn away from you in unbelief, but rather help us to trust in your word and grow in our faith. Amen.

Day 10 – March 11**Luke 7:36-8:3**

RECEIVE GRACE IN FAITH

DEVOTION

Simon the Pharisee, who invited Jesus home to dinner, only saw Jesus as a teacher, but did not recognize Jesus’ real identity as the Messiah that the Jews had been waiting for. In verse 39, when Jesus did not reject the sinful woman’s ministrations, Simon was so blinded by his prejudice that he didn’t even think Jesus was worthy to be called a Prophet.

In contrast, the woman recognized she could come to Jesus and be made whole. She risked public rejection by entering the Pharisee’s home uninvited to get close to Jesus. In his patient and gentle way, Jesus enlightened Simon through a parable. He showcased the woman’s humble demonstration of repentance, her faith and great love. In his grace, he restored her social status by publicly announcing that she was forgiven.

FOR REFLECTION

- What part of your life do you need Jesus to restore for you?
- Will you come to Jesus in faith to receive his grace?
- In what way have you been blinded by prejudice that hinders you from receiving the full blessings of the Lord?

PRAYER

Father God, forgive me for my arrogance in my relationships with family, friends and colleagues. Forgive me for the times that I have not recognized you for who you are.

Open my eyes Lord, that I may see my shortcomings and my desperate need for your grace. Amen.

Day 11 – March 12

Luke 8:4-25

THE MYSTERY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

DEVOTION

The gospel Jesus is preaching is the gospel of the kingdom of God. Signs and wonders evidence this kingly reign of God; the healing of the sick and the deliverance of those who are demon possessed. In the parable of the sower, the revelation of the kingdom of God is a heavenly mystery. Jesus uses a parable to explain this to us. To understand this mystery, we cannot use our intellectual ability, which only lets us see things that are comprehensible. Jesus says that we must use our 'heart' to understand, a spiritual heart to understand the mystery of the heavenly kingdom. This mystery is only revealed to those who are followers of Christ. A spiritual person can understand, while a worldly person cannot. The different conditions of people's hearts determine whether they can understand the truth of the kingdom of God.

Some people's hearts are just like soil on the roadside, giving no chance for the truth to grow before it is taken away by the devil. These people have no idea of the mystery of the kingdom of God. Although they come to church every week, the word of God has no effect on them. Some other people's hearts, though yearning a little for truth, are still hard like rock. Their spiritual soil is still not well prepared to receive God's word. No root can grow and no fruit can be borne. In times of testing, these people will just back out.

There are others who want to get the benefit of both worlds: they want the kingdom of God as well as the world. They end up living a weak and painful life. Only those with a noble and good heart are well prepared to bear good fruit. As the state of the heart is so important, it should be our priority to nurture and cultivate it, making it good soil for the Word of God to grow.

FOR REFLECTION

- How do you deal with the hardened, shallow, thorny parts of your life?
- In what ways is God encouraging you to make more of your life into a fruitful soil?

PRAYER

Thank you Lord, for the seed of the good news in my life. By your Holy Spirit, nurture the good soil and transform those parts, which are hardened, indifferent or compromised, so that I may be fruitful for you.

Day 12 – March 13

Luke 8:26-39

NO TAME LION!!

DEVOTION

After commanding the forces of nature to be still, Jesus commanded the forces of evil to be gone. Both incidents caused fear in those who witnessed them. It is difficult to be friends with those who have great power and authority. The disciples, who were in awe of Jesus, continued to follow and became effective under his authority. The town's people asked him to leave, anticipating trouble from their earthly authorities.

Great power and authority often causes great opposition. Jesus did not negotiate with the demons; he commanded them and gave them permission, causing their destruction anyway.

FOR REFLECTION

- Is our 'friendship' with Jesus robbing us of our effectiveness as disciples?
- Are we more concerned about the fate of the pigs than the amazing power of salvation?

PRAYER

Lord, help me to truly serve you as one who has been saved from destruction.

Day 13 – March 14

Luke 8:40-56

FOR THE DESPERATE

DEVOTION

My son was just a year and a half old when he had an allergic reaction to medicine. His body became red and swollen. He was having trouble breathing and was rushed to hospital by ambulance. My wife and I spent two terrifying days at the hospital before he returned to normal size and color. Those long hours praying and waiting for an answer are some of the most desperate moments of my life. Any parent can imagine Jairus' fear as he falls at Jesus' feet begging for the life of his sick daughter. Maybe he had tried the doctors, the healers, and Jesus was his last chance to save his daughter. Any person who has been ill can understand the woman's desire to be healed. Twelve years of sickness can make a person quite desperate.

Jesus is not flustered by these people's need. He accepts their desperate faith. He does not turn them away. Because their faith led them to Jesus, they are rewarded with healing and salvation. Just as Jairus and the unnamed woman approached Jesus needing to be helped, we too can be confident that Christ will not reject our desperate faith.

FOR REFLECTION

- Does this story reveal anything to us about Jesus' character?
- What does this story teach us about faith?
- Can we trust Jesus even in the most desperate of situations?

PRAYER

Holy Father, please help my faith hold firm. Help me to seek you and trust you in all situations. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Day 14 – March 15

Luke 8:40-56

ANOINTING OF THE WHOLE GROUP

DEVOTION

One version of the New International Version of the Bible that I use adds 'titles' to sections of the Gospel stories. Mostly they are helpful. The title they give to this section is 'A dead girl and a sick woman'. This does not encourage faith as we come to this passage of scripture! Power to heal and save is located in the person of Jesus.

Jairus does not let status or honor stop him from begging Jesus for the gift of healing. The woman comes to Jesus as a 'last resort' and a secret desperate grab at his cloak opens the door to her healing and subsequent salvation as she tells her sad story in full to Jesus. Jesus calls us to overcome the fear that blinds us to what he is doing; now we see the story is about a girl raised from the dead and a woman healed'.

FOR REFLECTION

- What gifts could you offer in the calling to pray, care and share the good news with people?
- Where do you see yourself in this group of disciples? Leading from the front or assisting from the back – we all have a place.

PRAYER

Dear Lord, we pray that the body of Christ in Hong Kong will no longer be separated. Instead, may they gather together in front of you to receive your commission, power, and authority. With your anointing, may the whole group be able to work together to accomplish your work in Hong Kong, to recover what you want to recover so that your name will be greatly exalted. Amen.

Day 15 – March 16**Luke 9:1-27**

FREE BUT NOT CHEAP!

DEVOTION

The message of this passage is: salvation is free, but it is not cheap. Does this sound like a paradox? If a gift is really free, can it cost you something to receive it?

Of course! If you were given a car as a free gift, you would actually still have to count the cost of whether or not you could afford to maintain it. You would have to pay for a license tag, motor oil, gasoline, and insurance. None of these payments go to the giver for they are simply inherent in the very nature of the gift itself. Salvation is that kind of free gift. Christ has already purchased it with his own blood. There is nothing more we need to do to obtain what he has given to us freely. However, accepting this free gift is going to cost us something and the cost is the cross... to deny self, take up our cross, and follow him.

FOR REFLECTION

- Jesus says discipleship is costly – what does that mean in your life?
- Taking up your cross is a very positive act – how will that affect your work, home or friendships?

PRAYER

Father, my salvation is free, but it is not cheap. It cost Jesus everything. He made the payment in full simply because he loved me. I'm forever grateful. Please give me the grace to deny myself, take up my cross, and follow you. Amen.

Day 16 – March 17**Luke 9:28-45**

THE GLORIOUS PRESENCE OF GOD

DEVOTION

In this Bible passage, Jesus took Peter, James, and John for a special revelation of his glory. These three disciples comprised the inner circle of the twelve. Jesus took them with him and went to a mountain to pray. It's called the 'Mount of Transfiguration'. When I visited Jerusalem, I learned that this mountain is traditionally considered to be Mount Tabor. My colleagues and I went up to the mountaintop by car and when we reached the peak, I was amazed! It's so high and is a truly magnificent place. You can see the beautiful surroundings.

As Jesus was praying, the appearance of his face transfigured, and his clothing became dazzling white. Jesus Christ allowed his glory to radiate through his whole being, and the mountaintop became a 'holy of holies'.

As we meditate on this event, let us keep in mind that Jesus has shared this glory with us as his followers, and he promised a glorious home forever. Discipleship is not built on spectacular visions, but on the inspired and unchanging word of God.' The important thing is not only seeing wonderful sights, but also hearing God's Word. 'This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.' In other words, we must follow and obey him. The dazzling light on the Mount of Transfiguration now shines in our hearts as we encounter Jesus Christ through the word.

You and I haven't seen what Peter, James, and John saw; but our experience comes by faith, not by sight. When we surrender our lives to God, he will transfigure our minds, he will purify our hearts, he will renew our whole being. As we yield to the Spirit of God, he changes us 'from glory to glory.'

FOR REFLECTION

- Why would Jesus take these three disciples to witness this marvelous event? Why only three, not twelve?
- If you were given a chance to take three people up a mountain to meet God, whom would you take? Why?
- How would you describe your relationship with Jesus Christ right now?

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for this challenging and enlightening message. I acknowledge that your Word is the light of my life. Help me to abide in your Word and worship you daily so that I will be transformed and reflect your glory to those I meet today and every day. Amen.

Day 17 – March 18**Luke 9:46-62****A RADICAL COST****DEVOTION**

We live in a world where things are not often what they seem and where there always seems to be a 'catch' to everything... whether it is an airplane ticket, apartment square footage or phone bill. We are always surprised by something undisclosed or misleading.

But throughout the gospels, and in this passage, Jesus is always very upfront about the cost of being his disciple...he does not want us to be confused or misled.

Often in church we present people with 'a sexy gospel', a gospel that is a shadow of what it really means to follow Jesus because we do not want to scare them away

or turn them off from God. But Jesus tells us very clearly in this passage that to

be his disciple we must commit ourselves completely...with our whole being, and that it cannot just be a good thing but that it needs to be the most important thing.

The first man in this parable is drawn away by the reality of hardships that will come as we follow Jesus, the next person sees 'no urgency' to following Jesus (I can do it when I am old or retired), and the last person is struggling with a divided heart and loss of focus. Jesus, in this passage, is saying to us that to follow God is not just another task we add to our lives and to do list... Jesus says, it is everything!

FOR REFLECTION

- How often is our commitment to Jesus just based on our feelings? If I feel like it or I need something from him then I will obey...
- The men in the passage all had idols or secrets that they could not give up to follow Jesus... what are the 'buts' in our lives?
- What would our churches and communities look like if we dealt with these things in our lives?

PRAYER

Father, as I look at these passages, I realize that I am seen in every one of these excuses as to why I cannot fully follow Jesus. I confess and repent of my lack of love for Jesus and that sometimes I love other things more than him. Help me to see that he is the only thing in this world that does not change. Help me to see that Jesus is worthy of everything. Help me to worship and follow him this day.

Day 18 – March 19**Luke 10:1-24****WITH JOY****DEVOTION**

The Lord commissions 72 disciples to go ahead of him, preparing the way. He gives them clear guidance and prepares them for what they are certain to face as they speak his message and show his love: both acceptance and rejection. What encouragements we find for ourselves here! We, too, are called to be 'preparers' for the Lord in our workplaces, in our families, in our relationships. Through our lives, our love, and our words we open doors for the entrance of the Saviour. True, some may not welcome or realize what is offered in Jesus, yet the Lord has given us the responsibility and the privilege of representing him, of 'living' for him in a world that desperately needs his presence.

FOR REFLECTION

Think of the times in your life when you have been hesitant to share Jesus' message, felt inadequate, or were afraid you would be rejected?

Consider the joy and pleasure, which comes from being a worker for Jesus in his harvest fields. Give thanks.

PRAYER

Father, forgive me for being hesitant to obey in this area of my life. I want to experience going out with confidence because you have empowered and sent me. I want to know the joy of bearing your message and showing your love. And, Lord, if I haven't said it recently, thank you for letting me partner with you in what you are doing.

Day 19 – March 20

Luke 10:25-42

FAITH IN THE KITCHEN

DEVOTION

The Good Samaritan is a famous parable. When the lawyer asked Jesus the question about eternal life, he was asking what Jesus saw as the essential requirements of the Law. I can just see Jesus smiling as he throws the question back in the lawyer's lap, 'What is written in the Law?' Jesus restrains from giving an answer and rather asks him, this learned man, what do you think the law says? The lawyer gives the orthodox response, he learned it well, concluding with the words: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Like many of us, the Lawyer, knew the right answer. However he was totally unprepared for Jesus' story about what compassion looks like in real life. Jesus defines neighbor with a powerful story. One that identifies compassion is based on need not worth. A compassion, which feels, does, costs something and demonstrates our relationship with God. The question for the lawyer, and for us, is posed; who was the man's neighbor? The lawyer cannot bring himself to say the word 'Samaritan' and so he responds, 'The one who had mercy on him.' The question leads to an instruction for him, and for us, 'Go and do likewise.'

FOR REFLECTION

What kind of neighbor are you?

Who do you need to reach out to, and how can you show them true compassion?

PRAYER

God of compassion, may we feel your heart for those in need, may we feel your pain for those abused, may we have the courage to reach out to all who are in need. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Day 20 – March 21

Luke 11:1-26

THE LORD GIVES WHAT YOU NEED

DEVOTION

This passage is the most powerful key for believers. Jesus teaches his disciples how to pray and gives three important points for how to approach our Heavenly Father. He teaches how to start our prayer with worship; how to learn to receive the daily living word for our life, receiving the bread of life. He also highlights the importance of asking for forgiveness and releasing forgiveness through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. The whole passage is about a relationship with God through Jesus. We may use the intimate word Abba to speak to God who is eager, in contrast to the reluctant friend, to give good gifts to his children. Such a relationship leads us naturally to be people who are asking, seeking and knocking. This is one of the most powerful passages in the Bible. Our generous God will give his Holy Spirit to those who ask. This all springs out of our relationship with him. The passage highlights not only our friendship with the Lord Jesus Christ but that also we may shamelessly request and joyfully receive the Holy Spirit to empower and equip us for service. In this way we will walk from glory to glory, from victory to victory in our daily Christian life.

FOR REFLECTION

What is more important: what to pray or how to pray?

Are you the friend of Jesus Christ; does it make any difference in your life? Are you willing to step to another level in this relationship?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father! I confess the poverty of my worship and I am willing to establish a prayer life according to your teaching through Jesus Christ—to establish a daily covenant with you through worship. Please teach me how to enter into the heavenly tabernacle through prayer to experience a daily fellowship with you. Amen! Soli Deo Gloria!

Day 21 – March 22

Luke 11:27-52

SEE AND SHINE

DEVOTION

My friend Paul and I once took a short cut on our way home from school. It took us through a large, dark, underground tunnel that served as an oversized water drain for the railway line above. At the halfway mark, in absolute darkness, Paul fell over. Seemingly unscathed and unperturbed by his fall, we felt our way forward to the light at the end of the tunnel. Now standing by a roadside in the afternoon sun, we were shocked to see that Paul was in fact bleeding badly from a deep and long cut to the calf of his leg. He needed urgent medical assistance to stop the bleeding, but had we not been in the light, we would never have known.

God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. When we hear it and obey it, we will see clearly and shine. And when we shine, those things that once lurked in the darkness to harm us will be revealed and healing can then take place.

FOR REFLECTION

What wounds are we carrying in our lives that go undiagnosed and untreated simply because we don't allow God's light to shine on them? What pain, hurt, guilt or regret is hidden in your life that you would like God to help you with? Let him shine his light and bring healing to your life right now.

PRAYER

Father, I ask today that you would shine in my life by your Holy Spirit. I confess I've hidden things from you, but right now I ask that you would search me, and wherever there are wounds, heal me. I thank you for making me whole today, in Jesus name. Amen!

Day 22 – March 23

Luke 12:1-12

JOINING A REVOLUTION

DEVOTION

What did the huge crowds flocking to be with Jesus think they were doing? Faced with such apparent 'success' Jesus turns his focus to his closest followers, his disciples. If this inner circle of followers is not clear on what it means to be a disciple there is no hope for the crowds. Jesus lays down the challenge of integrity – everything that we might well prefer hidden will be revealed one day, so integrity is the only logical option. Jesus lays down the challenge of fearless devotion to him in the face of opposition and persecution – it is 'when' not 'if' his disciples are hauled before the authorities.

Jesus lays down the challenge of accepting the testimony of the Spirit. If we set our hearts and minds against the Spirit, the one who brings us to Jesus, then we should not be surprised that we end up far away from Jesus and unforgiven in our hardhearted rebellion.

FOR REFLECTION

How can you embrace this call to a personal 'revolution' more fully? In what ways do you lessen the challenge when Jesus says, 'Come, and follow me'? How can you be better informed and more faithful in praying for Christian sisters and brothers around the world who are facing opposition and persecution for the sake of Jesus?

PRAYER

Father I confess my reluctance to stand out as a devoted disciple of Jesus. Save me from fearing the wrong people and things. Grant me the inner renewal that produces a life of integrity so that I may testify in word and deed to the grace I have received through Jesus. Keep me faithful in prayer for my brothers and sisters facing persecution for the name of Jesus.

Day 23 – March 24

Luke 12:13-34

HOW DO WE RESPOND?

DEVOTION

God has a plan and moves in our lives. And yet, our actions, for good or for bad, have an impact on what happens to others and us. Therefore, at least some of life is made up of a combination of what we have to work with and what we do with those resources and opportunities! This passage from Luke reminds us that, 'God knows and cares what we do and what happens to us.' Would it be too much to invite us all to repeat that simply profound truth in the first person, say 10 times? ('God knows and cares what happens to me!') Because this is true, be very careful what you do and what you want, especially because you may get it and still remain unhappy. True happiness is never measured in what we have, but is a by-product of trusting God to give us what we need.

Our culture is focused on acquiring things and gaining status. What do you discern that God wants for your life? If it is true that God knows and cares what happens to me – how does that change my priorities?

PRAYER

Father God, You know all about me, yet you love me; you care deeply for me and want the best for me. Help me to know you, to love you, and want to do my best for your glory.

Amen.

Day 24 – March 25

Luke 12:35-59

PARTY! TO CELEBRATE!

DEVOTION

It's a phenomenal thought really: that after a lifetime of 'being dressed for action' we will find Jesus pulling out a chair for us, bidding us to sit and rest, while he comes to serve us. The thought of being able to unlace our work boots and slide into some comfy slippers for eternity is a lovely thought indeed. After all, we do get tired, don't we?

We have been the recipients of much grace; we have been entrusted with the gospel. Much is required; even more is demanded of us. So we keep our lamps lit, and we watch and wait and we expect his coming. It is said, 'blessed is that slave whom his master will find at work when he arrives.' Blessed are we when we keep at it, day after day, year after year, not giving up on hope or on him. And even more blessed is our master when he arrives. But notice this: what is coming is not a thief in the night; it is a party in the morning, a party where we who aspire to be servants of the Lord will be served, treated as guests of honor. And our Lord really is a remarkable host! He invites us to regular pre-party parties! For each time we come to his table, he recognizes our weariness, and again and again he sits us down, and he comes and serves us, saying, 'This is my body, broken for you. This is my blood, shed for you.'

And then he sends us out into the world with lamps ablaze and hearts on fire to keep on watching and waiting and loving the kingdom that is the Father's good pleasure to give us.

FOR REFLECTION

What are you most hoping for when Christ re-appears on earth?

Are there other servants in the kingdom with whom you stay awake and keep your lamp lit?

How do you encourage one another?

Are you tired of doing kingdom work? Give your fatigue to God (Read Mathew 11:28-30).

PRAYER

Lord, thank you that you prepare a table for us in your presence. Anoint and empower us to serve you and others until that great day when our work is done, and your work is completed. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 25 – March 26

Luke 13:1-21

WHO IS TO BLAME?

DEVOTION

A common reaction when a disaster strikes, is ‘Why did this happen?’ If we are honest, we often attempt to reassure ourselves that the disaster has human causes that would never happen where we live. But when a disaster strikes at home, or to us, we are shocked and our common reaction is ‘Why did this happen to me, and who is to blame?’ If we believe the Bible, there is an event coming one day that will be to many people catastrophic eternally. In this passage Jesus is once more calling people’s attention to the need for honest, urgent action. Our action needs to be honest because we are all so good at deceiving ourselves (1 John 1:8) The crowds around Jesus consoled themselves that when bad things happened to other people, it was because they were really sinful (unlike themselves!), and deserved it. But Jesus tells them, ‘don’t think that the poor victims of various disasters are more worthy of death and judgment’. He makes the point that we all are in the same situation. God’s day of judgment is coming, and our honest response should be: We are at fault. So we must put our trust in Jesus.

Our action also needs to be urgent. In the little parable of the barren fig tree, we easily assume that the man who owned the vineyard represents God. But in fact the vinedresser is the one who urges patience for a little while longer. This is the divine reaction that Jesus is pointing to.

The fruitfulness of repentance and faith is what Jesus came for, and it is what God looks for in us all. God is still patient for a time. But time is running out for us and everyone to be found fruitful in this way.

FOR REFLECTION

Is there some aspect of your life where you can see that you judge others more harshly than yourself, or worse, excuse yourself altogether?
Is Christian fruitfulness something you seek from God regularly?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, I accept that I easily defer any sense of guilt for sin in myself but am quick to judge others for the same things. Please forgive my hypocrisy and make my heart more sensitive to your grace today. And give me today a due sense of urgency for those around me who do not trust in Jesus.

Day 26 – March 27

Luke 13:22-35

WHILE YOU STILL CAN

DEVOTION

You are still on the escalator, and there is the open door of the MTR train before you. You race past the other people, trying to reach the door before it closes. You hear the warning beeps. And just as you approach the door, it swiftly shuts in front of you. Remember the frustration? Now multiply that by infinity. Jesus speaks of a similar door, yet one with eternal consequences. Once it is shut it is too late. Your heart drops to the floor when you see your friends inside, and you are standing outside.

Only in Luke’s gospel does Jesus describe most vividly the harsh reality of the words, ‘Once the owner of the house has got up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside the door and knock..’ So repent and put your faith in Jesus while you still can. You cannot appeal to your church membership, your family’s Christian heritage, your knowledge of Christian traditions, your denominational loyalty, even to your frequent prayers, and large donations to the poor. The door is Jesus. There is only one way through – renounce your old and wicked ways, and turn to Jesus.

Perhaps you have been waiting. You might say; I must first know everything about Christianity, I must first get established in my career, I want to first experience pleasures of this world. I must first clean up my life. Then after that, I will trust and follow Jesus wholeheartedly, you say. My friend, do not delay. The door may close. Repent and believe in Jesus now.

FOR REFLECTION

What are the things, which hold us back from wholehearted commitment to Christ?

Once we enter the ‘narrow door’ this passage reminds us of our responsibility to respond to God’s lavish grace day by day. How does that work out in your life?

PRAYER

Dear Lord Jesus, I have waited too long. So Lord Jesus, save me now, a sinner. I renounce my wicked ways, and put my full trust in what you have done on the cross for me. Now I enter through your door of salvation. Out of my gratitude for your salvation, I give you my life. It is yours.

Day 27 – March 28

Luke 14:1-14

TAKE YOUR SEAT – HUMBLY!

DEVOTION

Jesus' teaching is full of practical wisdom. This parable describing how to take a seat in a wedding banquet is most relevant to Asian culture. Asians hold banquets on many happy occasions, not only weddings, but also birthdays, job promotions and various festivals. The question about how to arrange the seats according to the relationship between the host and guests, taking into account the importance of the guests, is always a difficult task.

However, Jesus made a very practical suggestion to the guest: to take the most humble seat. In that way the guest would avoid the embarrassment of being asked to move from a prominent seat to a mere lowly one. Also he would be able to receive the honour of moving from a humble seat to a higher position if that is what the host had planned.

Jesus also suggests that inviting those who are poor to attend such a banquet, is more blessed than if you simply invited the rich. This is because the poor, who are in need, will not be able to return the invitation in contrast to the rich. Such gracious humility and lavish hospitality to those in need is in fact the life style of Jesus in the world and the purpose of incarnation.

FOR REFLECTION

- So, what will be the expectation of your life? Are you aiming to climb the social ladder by your own effort?
- Or you are willing to humble yourself to serve the poor and receive honour from our Lord rather than human beings?
- In your daily life, do you just want to please the rich in order to get rewards from them? Are you willing to serve those who have nothing rather than those who have much already?

PRAYER

Lord of life, show me the way of life and let me see clearly the purposes you have for me. Lead me to live a meaningful life by humbling myself to serve the poor. Let me see myself not according to the world's expectation and standard. Let me experience your promise that those who are willing to lose their life will receive abundant life. This I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Day 28 – March 29

Luke 14:15-24

THE INVITATION

DEVOTION

Have you ever hosted a large party (maybe a wedding), sent out invitations, spent massive amounts of money (on food, venue rentals, decorations), invested an incredible amount of time in planning....and then people who had RSVP'd didn't show up? I don't mean just a few but a noticeable amount? You can imagine the disappointment and even anger you would feel. To the Jewish listeners this parable would have been laughable, ludicrous. No such scenario would ever happen. This banquet would have been the social highlight of the town. In ancient eastern traditions, if you received an invitation to a meal, it was an extension of friendship and when you refused that, it was a statement that you no longer wanted friendship with that individual.

The excuses given are even more ridiculous. You would rather watch dirt than come to the party? Really? The next excuse about oxen is probably a flat out lie because you would never purchase that many oxen before 'trying them out' first. Finally, the last excuse would have been absurd because in ancient culture, the implication that the wife dictates what the husband is and is not allowed to do, was unthinkable.

This tremendous act of generosity and kindness is returned with indifference and contempt. Jesus is showing his listeners that as ludicrous as it sounds, that's how we have treated this invitation to eternal life. By God's very nature, he is inviting all people, including the poor, to a wonderful banquet that will take place (Isaiah 25:6). Those who refuse the invitation will be excluded from the feast. Such exclusion is not God's desire. God's invitation is free and for all.

FOR REFLECTION

- What are some excuses people make today to refuse the invitation to eternal life?
- Have you received an invitation from God? Did you accept or refuse?

PRAYER

Jesus, help us recognize that all of your invitations are worthy of our 'yes'. Forgive us for insulting you by refusing to participate. May we stop making excuses and accept your invitation. Let this invitation go to the ends of the earth and may we see all people, especially the poor and the oppressed, experience your glory as we look forward to the final banquet. Amen.

Day 29 – March 30

Luke 14:25-35

THE CROSS IS COSTLY

DEVOTION

‘Can I be a believer but not a disciple?’ I was once asked. ‘What do you think is the difference between a believer and a disciple?’ I responded. Candidly she answered, ‘There are higher requirements for disciples.’ The truth is, whether you claim to be a believer or a follower, Jesus gives no excuse: ‘If anyone comes to me and does not ‘hate’... cannot be my disciple.’ ‘Hate’ is an exaggeration normal in this kind of teaching. It does not mean alienation from people, or being destructive of one’s own life. Rather it emphasizes that nothing should limit the freedom to follow Jesus.

Jesus sees himself not only as our Savior, but also our Lord, our Master. One cannot serve two masters. Either you will devote to one and despise the other. Some might think, ‘I won’t deny that I’m a believer of Jesus, but to follow him closely is another story. It depends on the cost I have to pay.’ Throughout my journey of following Jesus, I have learnt something precious: though the cost of obedience is high, that of disobedience is always higher – if not unbearable. The Cross is costly and radical. It is not moderate. Just as you would not order a cup of lukewarm coffee or a warm ice cream (it’s either hot or cold!), the same principle applies to your relationship with your Master.

FOR REFLECTION

- What is your status now, a believer, a traveller or a disciple? Or do you want to draw back?
- Are you traveling or walking with Jesus?
- What cost are you willing to pay in order to walk with Jesus and follow him as a disciple? Jesus will not lower his requirement. The question is: are you willing to give up everything to follow him?

PRAYER

Father, have mercy on me. Open my spiritual eyes so I can see The Kingdom of God and find the pearl, so that I’m willing to lay down everything in this world to follow you wholeheartedly. Help me be willing to be disciplined by you as your true child, and become salt and light in this world of darkness. Amen.

Day 30 – March 31

Luke 15:1-32

JOY AT BEING FOUND

DEVOTION

We always enjoy a good party. Birthday, wedding or baby shower are all wonderful occasions we would love to attend. However, have you ever attended a party celebrating a broken relationship, which became mended? It must be awkward to attend such a party. Where do you start a conversation?

In our reading today, the father threw a lavish party with the best food reserved for special guests just because his runaway son returned. Is that a cause for a big celebration? For God, the greatest joy is when sinners return to him. The father’s joy was such a contrast to the anxiety he felt when waiting at the open door, just in case his rebellious son happened to decide to come home.

Do you know God has a lavish party ready just in case we return to him? For God, our return brings him the greatest joy. For us, when we return to God by repenting of our sins, by being a peace maker, by being willing to let go of grudges and forgive someone who has wronged us, by living a life according to his teaching, joy and peace will also come upon us as well. This path towards wholeness is what Lent is calling us to embark on. God has a big party ready waiting for our return. Don’t let God wait any longer for our return to him!

FOR REFLECTION

- In what ways do you find yourself ‘returning’ to God?
- Like the older brother, churches are filled with people who are living out their duty and not experiencing the joy of a personal relationship with God. Is this you?
- Do you really appreciate the love you live in?

PRAYER

Thank you dear God, that your mercy and forgiveness greet us when we come home. Help me to be at home with you, to rejoice with others and share the good news of your love. For Jesus’ sake. Amen.

Day 31 – April 1

Luke 16:1-18

FAITHFULNESS WITH MONEY

DEVOTION

Here in Luke 16, when Jesus established by what criteria faithfulness is judged, he focused on three main areas:

1. Little things
2. Money
3. What belongs to others

He reveals that if we have been faithful in these relatively small areas, then we qualify to be given great responsibility, true riches and our own world to rule over. We might think that if we were faithful with spiritual riches, then God would grant us worldly riches. But the opposite is what Jesus declares!

Faithfulness with money is about living right with God's money! I am convinced that what we do with that portion of our money, which belongs to God (Lev 27:30), is the most insightful revelation of who we really are.

FOR REFLECTION

- God wants us to give our best in all things, and this includes the area of our finances.
- What is the biggest obstacle preventing me from giving my best to God?

PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, I surrender those things that I am holding on to and preventing me from giving you my very best. I pray that I will place my trust and security in you and not in the things of this world.

Day 32 – April 2

Luke 16:19-31

RICH MEN BEWARE!

DEVOTION

The whole of chapter 16 is about the use and abuse of riches. Luke describes the scene of two people and contrasts their lifestyles. One lives an ostentatious life, 'making merry', dressed in fine linen. He is oblivious to Lazarus, his beggar neighbour. Lazarus is placed each day near the entrance to the rich man's house but his plight and his ill health are ignored. It is interesting to note that in this parable, we know the name of the poor man, Lazarus, which means 'God helps/has helped'. It is the only parable in the gospels where Jesus names a character. I suggest it is done deliberately to emphasize that God knows everyone, sees everyone, knows their plight and needs. In sharp contrast Lazarus, lying daily in the outer porch of the rich man's house, is ignored by someone who could have been his benefactor. Both die. Their roles are radically reversed. In death Lazarus is retranslated to heaven in company with Abraham and the nameless rich man is constrained and tormented. This is a dramatic parable with vivid imagery, like many stories told at that time. It is not to be taken as a description of heaven and hell. Rather Jesus is challenging commonly held assumptions and calls on people to choose now a different lifestyle.

FOR REFLECTION

- The rich man was doing no more than living out the life of his social status. How do your life style choices and assumptions fit with God's care for the poor of the world?
- The assumption of the rich man is that if someone came back from the dead he would be believed. Luke indicates that this is not the case, but people should listen to the scriptures, which have the power to transform attitudes. How are your priorities changing?

PRAYER

Lord, I find my life choices challenged. Show me how to live simply, to care for those in need and commit myself to living daily by the truth and power of the Risen Christ.

Day 33 – April 3

Luke 17:1-19

ONE OF THEM CAME BACK AND THANKED HIM

DEVOTION

The ten lepers did what Jesus told them to do. And as they went away they were healed. But only one came back to thank Jesus. That is a very low gratitude ratio. I wonder if even today, and even in my life, Jesus gets thanked only 10% of the time. Judging from the paucity of ‘thank you’ notes I have written and even verbal gratitude I have expressed, I fear I would have left with the nine and not turned back to thank Jesus. Yet there is an attitude of gratitude that the one leper expresses that brings us close to the heart of the Gospel. Jesus acted and the lone leper responded with gratitude and faith. Jesus says this faith brought spiritual wholeness as well as physical healing (salvation).

FOR REFLECTION

- Would you be one of the lepers who was healed and left or be the one leper who came back, praised God, fell at the feet of Jesus, and thanked him?
- Is it possible to be obedient without being thankful?

PRAYER

Gracious God, you call us to fullness of life: deliver us from unbelief and banish our anxieties with the liberating love of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Day 34 – April 4

Luke 17:20-37

THE PRESENCE OF GOD

DEVOTION

This passage is filled with fascinating, disturbing details that raise intriguing questions about one of the more difficult areas of theology: the end times. If you are like me, it takes intentionality to push past speculation and focus on the main message of the passage, which is really quite clear.

Like the days of Noah and Lot, the world is headed toward an end when many will engage in life without concern for God. Jesus takes time to explain this to his followers. However to the Pharisees who ask the question about when the kingdom of God will come, Jesus states that it is now among them in his person. In other words, they must deal with him here and now! The same is true today. In the face of the debate as to whether Jesus is the only way, Christ’s message is that the road to participation in God’s presence and blessing goes through him. ‘The kingdom of God is among [us]’ in the person and spirit of Christ.

FOR REFLECTION

- In the midst of your struggles and questions, do you ever simply pause to intentionally sense God’s presence around and within you in the person of Christ? It can make a difference!

PRAYER

God, we thank you for your active presence in today’s world through the Spirit of Christ. Comfort and encourage us during those times we are so caught up in details that we forget the clear presence of your love for us.

Day 35 – April 5**Luke 18:1-14**

HOW DO YOU PERCEIVE GOD?

DEVOTION

In Jesus' time, a woman without a husband had no income, no status and no rights. How could she expect justice by calling upon a corrupt and heartless judge?

Today, we also are so accustomed to hear about corruption and cases of flagrant injustice that many of us have become cynical and defeatist—'Nothing will change. It's useless...'

Jesus is not comparing God to this corrupt judge; rather, he emphasized that this poor widow finally gained what she asked for through her persistence. In the same way, if we are convinced that God loves us and will speedily intervene for us, how much more will we keep on praying with faith for our needs. The tax collector also felt insignificant. He was not a religious man and considered himself a sinner. Nevertheless, he came in total humility looking for mercy, trusting that God is a forgiving God. He returned home justified unlike other self-righteous people. The way you perceive God, and your relationship to him, determines whether you will keep on praying and receive his help, or if you will easily get discouraged.

FOR REFLECTION

- Is God too busy for you or is he eager to listen and respond to your needs?
- Are you too unimportant to disturb God or do you see yourself as a beloved child of God?
- Keep praying all the time. Don't give up. Your persistent faith will be rewarded.
- When you approach God, check your heart and motives. Come with humility. Make sure you approach God with the righteousness that comes through believing in Jesus Christ.

PRAYER

O dear God, thank you for reminding me that you are a merciful and loving God. You take pleasure when you hear me calling you promptly reach out, granting me your presence, your grace and all I need. What a wonderful God you are. I will praise you forevermore.

Day 36 – April 6**Luke 18:15-30**

TRUST

DEVOTION

When a young child looks into the eyes of a loving parent there is complete trust. This is the example Jesus points to and in this passage we see it illustrated in three different ways. Jesus did not just ask the rich ruler to believe and trust in him. Instead he challenged him to demonstrate his complete trust.

Like many, the young man trusted in his money and connections more than in God. Jesus required him to give away that security, and trust in him. When someone leaves home or family for Jesus' sake, they give up things people normally trust for security and love. But in exchange they find even greater love and security.

Jesus had to place all his trust in the promises of the Father, that through the suffering and shame that awaited him in Jerusalem, he would be raised from death.

FOR REFLECTION

- In what, or who, do you really trust?
- Words of trust and faith are spoken easily: actions are much harder.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, if I have placed my trust in anything but you, I ask that you show me and challenge me so that I may follow you even on the darkest road.

Day 37 – April 7**Luke 18:35-19:10**

TODAY

DEVOTION

Jesus' days were seemingly filled with chance encounters and interruptions. People interrupted him as he taught, preached, healed, traveled and tried to rest.

He met people while he was on the way somewhere else or simply passing through a place as in today's passage, which begins with Jesus 'passing through' Jericho. He didn't have an appointment with Zacchaeus – this was another interruption on his way to Jerusalem to literally save the world. Or was it?

Maybe it wasn't a chance encounter or an interruption. Maybe it was, as Jesus said, the reason he had come, 'to seek and to save the lost.' Saving the world is not an abstract mission, but rather a healing and helping of named individuals whom we meet along the way. Perhaps like Jesus, our life work is often carried out through our daily divine appointments and interruptions. Perhaps all the interruptions are in fact answers to our prayer that God would use us – even us, in his work today.

In our passage, there is a focus on today – 'I must stay at your house today', 'today salvation has come to this house'. What divine appointments or interruptions might God have for you and me today?

FOR REFLECTION

- If we know our life mission – 'why we have come' – then it's easier to discern opportunities to serve, and to not be distracted by the 'grumbling' of others or locked into our calendar. In our passage, Jesus describes his mission with, 'the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost'. In one sentence, what is your life mission?
- When we encounter Jesus, our lives are changed, and also the lives of those around us. Part of our 'repentance' or 'going a different way' involves making amends with any we might have wronged, as was the case with Zacchaeus. Are there any amends we need to make today?

PRAYER

Lord, bring me someone to serve, today! Amen.

Day 38 – April 8**Luke 19:11-27**

'WELL DONE, MY GOOD SERVANT'

DEVOTION

All believers are commissioned to preach the Gospel, to set up a church for Christ in the world, to bring the nations to the obedience of faith, and to build them up in it. 'You shall receive power to do this, for you shall be filled with the Holy Ghost' - Acts 1:8. All Christians have business to do for Christ in this world. We are called to do business for Christ as he furnishes us with gifts necessary for his business; he gave us power and he expects service. He delivers the pounds with this charge - 'Go work and Go trade'. We must continue to do our King's business till our King comes back, whatever difficulties or opposition we may meet within it; only those that endure to the end shall be saved.

Jesus has been exalted as King and will return in glory soon. We are his servants who have each received something to work with, to bring some return on investment. It's not too late to put all of our gifts and abilities to work for him. Not too late yet.

FOR REFLECTION

- When your King returns will he say to you 'Well done, my good servant'?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank you for trusting me with gifts and abilities and opportunities. Forgive me for wasted time and opportunities. Help me to learn how I can be most productive for your Kingdom. I do love you Lord and want you to be able to count on me as a 'good and faithful servant'. In Jesus' Name! Amen.

Day 39 – April 9

Luke 19:28-48

AIN'T NO ROCK GONNA CRY IN MY PLACE

DEVOTION

According to our text, on that day everything was going great until a few religious people came up to Jesus and told him to tell his disciples to keep quiet. Jesus said, 'If they kept quiet, the stones along the road would burst into cheers!'

That is what happens to us many times. Just when we decide to commit ourselves to serve the Lord and begin to give him praise like we've never done before, the enemy will bring in 'people, circumstances and situations' to dampen our spirits and mess with our heads. Let us be reminded that there is power when we open our mouths and praise God. The more the enemy tries to shut you down with all kinds of situations and thoughts in your mind, the more you need to lift up your voice and praise him!

We were created to praise HIM! If we don't praise him, the rocks will cry out his praises! This Holy Week and Easter season, let us lift up our voices and praise Jesus like we have never done before because 'ain't no rock gonna cry his praise in my place!'

FOR REFLECTION

- God has created us to praise him. Think about the honor and privilege he has given us to praise the Creator of the universe!
- Do not let people, circumstances and situations steal your praises for Jesus' purpose in your heart to praise God in all circumstances and situations.

PRAYER

Jesus, I thank you that I can praise you today. I'm sorry for the times I've let situations in my life steal my praises for you. Today, I want to praise you regardless of what I'm going through. It's my honor to praise you, Jesus! Amen!

Day 40 – April 10

Luke 20:1-19

A PERSISTENT LOVE

DEVOTION

I have two sons and I love them very much. They are the joy of my life. There is nothing good that I will withhold from them. Just like all fathers, even when my children upset me, I still love them and look out for their best interests.

You can see such a father's heart in the parable of the tenants. Even when the tenants repeatedly rebel against the landlord, he still keeps offering forgiveness and reconciliation. We know that Jesus is rebuking the religious leaders. However, behind such rebuke you can also hear the voice of a loving Father whose heart is broken: 'How many times have I offered you forgiveness? Why is your heart still so hardened? When are you going to respond to me? Even when you are so rebellious, I am still sending my son to die for you '

Jesus himself is God's persistent love in action. He never gives up on us. In this week when we move towards Good Friday and Easter Day, we prepare for a celebration of the ultimate love that we receive in God through Jesus.

FOR REFLECTION

- Is there someone that has shown you such persistent love that it has forever changed your life? How did you show your appreciation to them?
- Is there anyone in your life now who needs your persistent love?

PRAYER

Father God, in this time of preparation of Easter I thank you for your unrelenting love for me. Your love has convinced me that I am secure in you. I thank you for all the people that have modeled to me such persistent love. Give me courage to extend such love to those I cannot love now. Please give me strength to love as I have been loved. Amen.

Day 41 – April 11

Luke 20:20-40

YOUR QUESTIONS REVEAL YOUR HEART

DEVOTION

Her hands cradle her first Bible, ‘How do I read this book?’ she asks. Her words reveal her openness to releasing presumptions and discovering what God has to say through his written word.

Today’s questioners revealed closed hearts through the assumptions they voiced in the inquiries they aired. Jesus deftly worded his way through their traps to frame pictures even the simplest listener could understand. He would not be tricked into identifying with any earthly ruler. Nor would a loaded question coming from a limited earthly interpretation of scripture, own his answer regarding the afterlife.

Jesus knew the rigid hearts of the religious elite. The stories he told rose from the dust of everyday life. With simple language and profound meaning, he still disturbs the carefully arranged boundaries people seek to create for him.

Perhaps our journey through Lent could help us find the secret of simplicity in faithful submission to our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

FOR REFLECTION

- What presumptions are you stumbling over on the way to a better relationship with Jesus?
- What simple truth have you made so complex that you cannot see God anymore because of all you have placed around him?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, wash the eyes of my heart so that I can get a fresh look at your Word.

Let my soul open to your crisp vitality that I may rediscover your spring in my step.

Hear my prayer in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Day 42 – April 12

Luke 21

THE END OF THE END OF DAYS

DEVOTION

Terrible things are in store for the world, Jesus says. Nations will rise against nations, persecutions will become the norm, the temple will be destroyed (and it was), and nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is about to happen in the world. But the world will not end that way. These are only signs of the end. Whatever terrible times we are experiencing in our lives, things will not end in disasters and anxieties. At the end, when we lift our heads, we will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. We will see our redemption. We will see the kingly reign of God, which we have prayed daily to come, actually come. We will stand before the Son of Man.

Living life in this fallen world is difficult, but those who keep focused on the vision of the returning Jesus, will get through this life carefully, watchfully and prayerfully. They will stand blameless before him when he returns. Remember the grace you’ve already received and the grace you will receive when Christ returns. And keep going...

FOR REFLECTION

- ‘All’s well that ends well.’ How does the knowledge of the return of Jesus Christ put the troubles in your life in perspective?
- Does the vision of Jesus’ return fill you with joy or fear? Why?

PRAYER

Loving God, thank you for the love you’ve shown in sending Jesus. Thank you for the Holy Spirit that you’ve sent to be with us and for the promise of your son’s return. Help me to fix my vision on that glorious return, so I may be careful, watchful and prayerful now and bring you glory on that last day. Amen.

Day 43 – April 13

Luke 22:1-38

HOLY FOOD – BREAD AND WINE

DEVOTION

These two elements were common on tables in Jesus' day. Bread and wine also had special meaning in the Jewish Passover meal. Yet, their meaning was transformed again when Jesus broke bread and poured wine at the last supper with his closest friends. Bread is a symbol of his mortal body broken on the cross so that we could become friends with God. Wine is a symbol of his innocent blood shed so that we could become friends with our enemies. Every day we have the opportunity to experience the real presence of Jesus in our homes, churches and community. This happens when we offer friendship to the stranger, the alien, the outcast, the person no one likes, the last person on earth we want to invite to our table. That's what Jesus did during his life. That's what

Jesus made possible for us through his death.

FOR REFLECTION

- Is there anyone, or any group, that you have excluded from the table at your church, your home or your community?

PRAYER

Holy God, open our hearts and minds to the opportunity to make friends with those from every walk of life in Hong Kong. Let us do this in remembrance of your Son, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Day 44 – April 14

Luke 22:39-23:12

TO RECEIVE GRACE WITH FAITH

DEVOTION

In modern society we are subject to great pressures such as heavy workloads, strained interpersonal relationships and tight economic conditions. Moreover, with advanced modern technology, we are exposed to even greater challenges. We may be addicted to the online illusory world that lures us into the devil's temptation. Jesus' experience of praying in Gethsemane tells us that prayer is a pressure releasing tool and the best weapon to withstand the devil's temptation. It is also a through channel that helps us maintain a good relationship with God.

There is a familiar hymn that says:

Every time I pray, I move your hands;

what my hands cannot do, prayer can.

Every time I pray, the mountain can be moved,

the road can be straightened,

every nation will turn to you.

FOR REFLECTION

- When you face difficulties in your work, your daily life and your service to God, do you rely on yourself to settle them, or do you lay your problems in God's hands through prayer?

- In the process of learning to pray, do you encounter any difficulties? How do you overcome them?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, forgive my laziness in spiritual exercise, forgive me for not persevering in my prayer life, and not maintaining a close relationship with you through prayer. Oh, heavenly Father, please let my faith be strengthened through prayer! Amen.

Day 45 – April 15

Luke 23:13-43

WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT 'GOOD FRIDAY'?

DEVOTION

That day saw the hypocritical religious establishment using whatever means possible to justify their ends, a bloodthirsty crowd seeking entertainment from the sufferings of others, career-minded Pilate making a decision to appease the crowd, scoffers and hard hearted soldiers taunting the Lord. We then saw the crucifixion of a totally innocent man. And doesn't it trouble you to hear Jesus say to the dying thief, 'Today you will be with me in paradise!'

That's not fair! Surely paradise cannot be the home for a criminal who had earlier insulted Jesus. Shouldn't paradise be reserved for the Lord's faithful followers? To be honest, it goes against my sense of fairness to see this criminal enter paradise because of a last minute decision. So shouldn't we call 'Good Friday', 'Unjust Friday' instead?

What Jesus said to the thief seems to make no sense and is so hard to accept. Yet his 'unjust act' of forgiving the thief is what made this particular Friday good. To this day, our Lord continues to demonstrate his forgiveness to each of us. Like the thief, we are guilty as charged and do not deserve his forgiveness. Yet when we believe in him, the Lord calls us his dear children and prepares a place for us in heaven. Yes, 'Good Friday' is indeed good.

FOR REFLECTION

- Does the Lord's 'unfair' act challenge my idea of fairness?
- How does the Lord's reaction to what happened to him on Good Friday challenge my response to people and circumstances each day?

PRAYER

Father, thank You for Jesus, who showed us the measure of your unreserved love, by loving the unlovely and forgiving the unworthy. Forgive my judgmental attitude and sense of fairness. Forgive my narrow-mindedness and prejudice. Forgive me and awaken my closed mind. Set my life ablaze with your overwhelming love. Amen

Day 46 – April 16

Luke 23:44-56

PROVIDENCE AND REALITY

DEVOTION

Try to imagine what those living in Jerusalem would have been feeling. For those having experienced the love of Christ, what would they do now? Those who'd mocked and killed him wondered why they didn't feel better about succeeding. Even the centurion recognized this was bigger than a crucifixion: surely this man was innocent!

No matter who experienced the reality of Jesus' death, it left an indelible mark. What about us two thousand years later? Faced with circumstances that seem beyond hope, can we trust in God's sovereign provision? Just as faith was required of the disciples that weekend, it is required of us today. Darkness has filled the land. Will we turn our hearts toward Christ, remembering God has a plan and will be honored even if we don't see it right now? Or will we allow the despair and pain to cripple us?

FOR REFLECTION

- Where are you today? Are you filled with hope knowing Sunday is coming?
- Have the trials and pains of this world overcome you?
- Will you turn your heart toward your loving Father knowing your life is in his perfect hands?

PRAYER

Father, today was not the end, but a breath in your miraculous work of deliverance for mankind. Thank you for Jesus, for his pain on my behalf, his undeserved love. May I rest in your great hope.

Day 47 – April 17

Luke 24:1-12

HE IS RISEN!

DEVOTION

Three words that changed the world. Darkness had covered the earth on Good Friday but now hope comes alive. Just when everything seems lost as Jesus lies in the tomb—God demonstrates his power to save by raising Jesus from the grave and releasing hope to the world.

Billy Graham tells of a meeting with German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. Adenauer asked Graham, 'Do you believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead?' Graham immediately answered that indeed he did. There was a long silence from the Chancellor and then he said, 'Outside of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, I know no other hope for mankind.' A most significant statement coming from one of the greatest statesmen of the 20th Century and the one who picked up the ruins after Hitler had left the world damaged and Germany mangled.

Those three simple words, 'He is risen' fill the believer with hope, promise, and eternal security. As we shout aloud this Easter Sunday that Jesus Christ has risen, let us celebrate God's victory over death and sin!

FOR REFLECTION

- Are there any areas of your life where you feel hopeless?
- How does the resurrection of Jesus speak into your hopelessness?
- Do you know anyone who may be in a hopeless situation? Pray about how you might help them.

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for the cross, which proved your willingness to save us. Lord, thank you for the resurrection, which proved your ability to save us. Lord, this Easter may my life be filled with hope, victory, and the assurance of eternal life. And Lord, give me an opportunity to fill someone's life with this same hope and love.

Day 48 – April 18

Luke 24:13-35

GOOD NEWS

DEVOTION

We all love news! Good news is fun to discuss, but bad news is better. We all love gossiping about what has gone wrong; politics, economics, wars - they are all fascinating. Imagine coming across someone who doesn't know about your favorite topic. Today's passage shows exactly that.

These two disciples were on their way to Emmaus, discussing the things that had happened over the past few days. Just three days earlier, Jesus, their hero, had been murdered. What's more, that morning, some believers had gone to the tomb and found it empty!

When the stranger hadn't heard the news, they couldn't wait to tell him. Jesus' response is very telling, and it is as relevant today as it was then: 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe.' Jesus patiently explained again what had happened so that these disciples could understand. We tend to focus on our own interpretation of things instead of God's plans. Sometimes God's plans can be difficult to grasp, but we need to realize that his plans are bigger, better and more complete than our own!

Like the two Emmaus travelers we often misunderstand God's plan for others and us. At the breaking of the bread their eyes were opened – may we receive this kind of insight.

FOR REFLECTION

- It doesn't matter what the latest news is. We can either choose to focus on the bad news, or we can focus on God's great news! Where and how do you see the risen Christ walking with you?

PRAYER

Lord, please forgive me for being more excited about news than you! Please patiently explain how your plans are woven in every story, and everything I experience.

Day 49 – April 19

Luke 24:36-53

SPEAK LORD, WE ARE LISTENING

DEVOTION

We live in a world of information saturation. I am constantly fatigued by the amount of information that bombards me, some of it by my own choice, and some not. And yet with all this information, I also often feel 'out of it'. Knowing the latest sports score, the most recent political development, or even the latest fashion trend, requires diligent effort and constant updating.

And within a day's time, this highly sought after information will be irrelevant.

And somehow the timeless scriptures seem to 'compete' with all these other attention seekers for part of my limited bandwidth. And parts of scripture can appear to be mysterious, leaving us with more questions than with answers. As an example, in this passage, does Jesus believe in ghosts? Hmm!

It is such a great comfort to know that God wants me to understand him. Jesus 'opened their minds so they could understand the scriptures'. Daily as I read God's word, I must lean into this promise as well. Of all the information that bombards my brain, what I need most is a word from God that I can trust. The greatest 'update' I can receive today, is scripture for my soul.

FOR REFLECTION

- What insights have I gained from journeying with Luke this Lent?
- How have my actions and reactions changed recently?
- In this Easter season, what are my priorities now?

PRAYER

God, thank you that you do not remain silent or distant. Thank you that you have chosen to reveal yourself through your Son, Jesus, and through your inspired word. Guard my mind from irrelevant and irreverent data, and open my mind so that I can understand your word more fully.