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JESUS'S LAST WORDS FROM THE CROSS

WHAT IS LENT?

Lent begins Ash Wednesday and ends the Saturday before Easter (this is 46 days when the Sundays are included). In most traditions, Sundays are celebrated as feast days, making the Lenten journey 40 days. The 40-day journey intentionally aligns Lent with Israel's 40 years of wandering in the wilderness (Exodus) and Jesus' 40-days facing the temptation of the devil (Luke 4:1-13).



To observe Lent is to strike at the root of complacency surrounding the death and resurrection of Jesus. Lent (literally “springtime”) is a time of preparation, a time to return to the desert where Jesus spent forty trying days preparing for his ministry. He allowed himself to be tested, and if we are serious about following him, we will do the same. Lent is traditionally associated with penitence, fasting, almsgiving, and prayer. It is a time for “giving things up” balanced by “giving to” those in need. Lent should never be morose – an annual ordeal during which we begrudgingly forgo a handful of pleasures. Instead, we ought to approach Lent as an opportunity, not a requirement. After all, it is meant to be the church's springtime, a time when, out of the darkness of sin's winter, a repentant and empowered people emerge.

Lent is the season in which we are surprised by joy. Our self-sacrifices serve no purpose unless, by laying aside this or that desire, we are able to focus on our heart's deepest longing: unity with Christ. In him – in his suffering and death, his resurrection and triumph – we find our truest joy.

Adapted from the introduction to *Bread and Wine: Readings for Lent and Easter*

FASTING

For centuries, Lent has been a time for prayer, fasting, giving to the poor, and dependence upon God. As we enter into Lent as a community, we invite you to consider fasting from a meal or an activity to focus on Jesus. Ask God what he might invite you to give up and give to, for his purposes this Lent. See page eight on fasting as a Spiritual Practice to help you be formed into the likeness of Jesus.



THIS DEVOTIONAL
GUIDE BEGINS ON
ASH WEDNESDAY.

LAST WORDS:

JESUS'S LAST WORDS FROM THE CROSS

Why did Jesus have to die?

Death seems an extreme measure to demonstrate love but what Jesus accomplished on the cross is at the center of Christian belief. The New Testament writer Paul declared:

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God ... For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified ...

My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power. 1 Corinthians 1:18; 2:2; 2:4-5

The focus of this devotional is on the last words Jesus spoke on the cross before the resurrection we celebrate on Easter. We will be guided by Scripture and the wisdom of theologians. One theologian you will see quoted often is Fleming Rutledge. These quotes come from her short devotional, *The Seven Last Words from the Cross*. For her deeper theological reflections, we recommend: *Crucifixion: Understanding the Death of Jesus Christ* and *The Undoing of Death: Sermons for Holy Week and Easter*. We also recommend: *The Cross of Christ*, by John Stott and *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection and the Mission of the Church*, by N.T. Wright.

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Christianity is unique. The world's religions have certain traits in common, but until the gospel of Jesus Christ burst upon the Mediterranean world, no one in the history of human imagination had conceived of such a thing as the worship of a crucified man. The early Christian preaching announced the entrance of God upon the stage of history in the person of an itinerant Jewish teacher who had been ingloriously pinned up alongside two of society's castoffs to die horribly, rejected and condemned by religious and secular authorities alike, discarded onto the garbage heap of humanity, scornfully forsaken by both elites and common folk, leaving behind only a discredited and demoralized handful of scruffy disciples who had no status whatsoever in the eyes of anyone.

The peculiarity of this beginning for a world-transforming faith is not sufficiently acknowledged. Too often, today's Christians are lulled into thinking of their own faith as one of the religions, without realizing that the central claim of Christianity is oddly irreligious at its core. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote that the weakness and suffering of Christ was, and remains “a reversal of what the religious person expects from God.”

... The cross of Jesus is an unrepeatable event that calls all religion into question and establishes an altogether new foundation for faith, life, and a human future.

Fleming Rutledge

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The intention of this guide is to help you draw near to Jesus through Scripture, prayer, and reflection. Each week of reading begins on Monday. Here is what you'll find:

Daily Prompts

Each day includes prompts to pause, read Scripture, ask God to speak to you, listen, obey his loving invitation, and worship him. Set aside 15-30 minutes for this time.

If listening to God is a new concept for you, we encourage you to seek to make prayer a conversation. Rather than approaching God with a list of requests and action items for him to accomplish, use this guide to practice listening to God through the Scripture and nudges from his Spirit. You can discover more about listening to God at Menlo.church/HearingGod.

Each day you will be invited to not only interact with God through prayer and Scripture reading but to obey what you sense him revealing to you. Obedience can feel more like an invitation to guilt than freedom but when the Bible speaks of obedience it is a call to live into our truest identity as God's image-bearers. Jesus tells his disciples (followers/apprentices) to “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20) because his commands guide us toward wholeness, love, and worship.

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is made complete in us.

In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. 1 John 4:9-12; 5:3-5

Formation Practice: Fasting

Each Monday, you will be prompted to choose what you will fast from that week. You might fast from the same thing every week or mix it up. See page eight for more on fasting.

Group Leaders:

Each week includes a guide for your group to help one another experience community, grow in becoming more like Jesus, and pray.



CONTENTS

ON FASTING _____ 8

WEEK ONE // FORGIVE _____ 10

Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing - Luke 23:34

WEEK TWO // PARADISE _____ 20

Truly, I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise - Luke 23:43

WEEK THREE // FAMILY _____ 35

Woman, here is your son. (And to his disciple) Here is your mother - John 19:26-27

WEEK FOUR // FORSAKEN _____ 48

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me - Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34

WEEK FIVE // THIRSTY _____ 63

I am thirsty - John 19:28

WEEK SIX // FINISHED _____ 76

It is finished - John 19:30

WEEK SEVEN // FATHER _____ 91

Father, into your hands I commit my spirit - Luke 23:46

FASTING

For thousands of years the Church has observed Lent as a way to remember Jesus's journey to the cross. One of the most common ways to remember this journey is through fasting.

Fasting is a practice used to center and focus our attention. We abstain from our normal appetites and desires not out of obligation or guilt, but out of a deeper desire to know Christ and his sufferings; to know Christ and his road to sacrifice; and to know Christ, as our ultimate food and sustenance. So, we use our cravings and urges to remind us of our ultimate desire: to know Jesus. When we hunger, we remember the one who is our eternal bread.

Just as Jesus laid down his agenda and life on his road to the cross, we lay down our preferences and comforts, to know him more. The most common way of fasting has been fasting from food, but fasting can center around technology, entertainment, working after hours, etc. We don't fast from these things merely for the sake of depriving ourselves, but to create intentional space and time to be in prayer with God. As we fast, we are reminded that we are dependent upon God for every aspect of our life.



Fasting is the voluntary denial of an otherwise normal function for the sake of intense spiritual activity. The focus of biblical fasting is always on spiritual purposes.

The desire of one who is fasting is to seek God, most often privately and with no motive to gain approval from people.

Fasting provides the opportunity to reveal those things that control us. It reminds us that we are sustained by every word of God, and it restores balance in a believer's life regarding priorities and nonessentials. Fasting must center on God. It must be God-initiated and God-ordained.

From: <https://renovare.org/articles/the-purpose-of-fasting>

Scripture on Fasting:

Deuteronomy 8:3; Nehemiah 1:4; Esther 4:3, 16; Psalm 69:10; Daniel 9:3; Matthew 4:2; 6:16-18; Mark 2:18-19.

Suggestions for Fasting:

- ▶ Pick one meal a week to fast during Lent. Use this devotional to focus on during that mealtime.
- ▶ If you choose to fast for three meals, we recommend you go from lunch time to lunch time the next day. *
- ▶ Tips for Healthy Fasting: menlo.church/healthyfasting
- ▶ Choose a technology fast from your phone during certain hours; social media; television and streaming; gaming, etc.
- ▶ Find a friend to join you in fasting. Check in once a week or daily for prayer or a quick word of encouragement.



**For some, fasting can be detrimental to their health. Please check with your doctor if you have had eating issues or plan to do an extended fast.*

More Resources on Fasting:

- ▶ The Bible Project, Feasting and Fasting: menlo.church/feastingandfasting
- ▶ menlo.church/lastwords



WEEK ONE FORGIVE

Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

Luke 23:32-34

DAY ONE ASH WEDNESDAY

Today is Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, beginning our journey toward the celebration of resurrection on Easter Sunday. The Christian Church has gathered for centuries on this day to receive ashes on her head as a symbol of grief and mourning for sin, repentance, and devotion to God.

As a community we may or may not have ashes placed on our head, but we desire to come before God with our hearts and minds surrendered to the same values:

Grief and Mourning for Sin

We recognize that we have a propensity to live apart from God, bent inward toward self and placing our faith in the lesser gods of self, financial security, personal control, and worldly esteem.

Repentance

The biblical word for repentance means “to change one’s mind” or “turn around.” In the Old Testament repentance was often accompanied with sackcloth and ashes but the aim of repentance isn’t merely to feel remorse but to change. Repentance is the act of turning from sin and turning toward the way of Jesus.

Devotion to God

To live in the way of Jesus is to rearrange our life to know him, follow his voice, and become like him. Philippians 3:8-11: *I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and*

participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

FASTING

Pause and ask God what he would have you fast from this week: meals, social media, being critical, television, etc.

PAUSE and acknowledge God’s presence with you. Thank him for seeing you and being with you.

READ SCRIPTURE

Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”

Luke 23:32-34

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:5-9

► **ASK** God to speak to you as you reflect upon the Scripture. In light of Ash Wednesday, talk with God about your grief over sin, how you desire to repent, and how you will align your heart with his to follow in the way of Jesus.

► **LISTEN** Hear Jesus pray to the Father for your forgiveness as he did on the cross: “Father, forgive (your name).” Hear Jesus forgive you. Listen for all that God wants to say to you today.

► **OBEY** Is there anything Jesus is asking you to do today? Perhaps it is simply something to believe. If so, ask him to help you believe.

► **WORSHIP JESUS** for his patience, kindness, forgiveness, and anything he revealed to you in Scripture.

NOTES



In the first word from the cross, Jesus does not pray for the good and the innocent. He prays for the people doing terrible things . . . (This) means that there is nothing that you or I could ever do, or say, or be, that would put us beyond the reach of Jesus' prayers. Nothing at all. And it also means that no one else, no one at all, is beyond that reach.

Fleming Rutledge

PAUSE and acknowledge God with you. Pause long enough for this reality to sink in.

READ SCRIPTURE

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." **Luke 23:34**

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in Jesus whom he loves. In Jesus we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us. **Ephesians 1:3-8**

- ▶ **ASK** God what do you want to say to me? What do you want me to see? What do you want me to believe? What do you want me to do?
- ▶ **LISTEN** for God's word to you from Scripture and the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ **OBEY** what God speaks to you. Obedience is not a burden but a freedom to live as God created you to live.
- ▶ **WORSHIP JESUS** for his presence and all that he has revealed to you today.

PAUSE and acknowledge God's presence with you. Thank him for seeing you and being with you.

READ SCRIPTURE

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." **Luke 23:34**

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Romans 5:1-11

► **ASK** God what do you want to say to me? What do you want me to see? What do you want me to believe? What do you want me to do?

► **LISTEN** for God's word to you from Scripture and the Holy Spirit.

► **OBEY** What is God inviting you to? What will you do today to apply this to your life?

► **WORSHIP JESUS** for his grace and anything he revealed to you in Scripture.

PAUSE and acknowledge God's presence with you. Thank him for seeing you and being with you.

READ SCRIPTURE

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." Luke 23:34

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

"But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.' But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.

When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened. Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart." Matthew 18:21-35

► **ASK** God what do you want to say to me? What do you want me to see? What do you want me to believe? What do you want me to do?

► **LISTEN** for God's word to you from Scripture and the Holy Spirit.

► **OBEY** What is God inviting you to? What will you do today to apply this to your life?

► **WORSHIP JESUS** for his abundant forgiveness and anything he revealed to you in Scripture.

NOTES

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

We believe community is vital for spiritual growth in faith and following Jesus. We hope you are using this devotional with your Life Group, family, roommates, or friends at work.

This is a simple guide for group discussion around your weekly reflections. You can also find the sermon and a sermon study guide at Menlo.Church/messages

Forgive: Luke 23:32-34

- What does it feel like being forgiven by someone?
- What does this teach us about Jesus?
- How does this act of forgiveness from Jesus call us to forgive in our lives?

Weekly Reflections from the Daily Devotionals

- Which passage of scripture was most impactful for you this week?
- What did you sense God saying to you this week?
- Where did you sense God's invitation to do or stop doing something this week?
- How did something from the devotionals speak into a particular moment of your life this week?

WEEK TWO

PARADISE

Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with Jesus to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left ... One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at Jesus: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Luke 23:32-33, 39-43



When God “remembers,” he does not just think about us. He acts for us, with power to save. Somehow the crucified criminal on Jesus’ right was able to see something that day that no one else saw. He saw Jesus reigning as a King and determining the destinies of people even in his tormented and dying state. To see him that way, Luke is telling us, is to see him as he truly is and to understand the source of his power. Not by signs and wonders, not by magic and dazzlement, not by “shock and awe,” but only by an ultimate act of God’s own self-sacrifice does Christ rule. His power is made known only through his death. I ask you now: Can you see yourself as one for whom Jesus died ... it was not only for the bandits and “bad elements”; it was for us too, with our masks of innocence and our delusions about our own righteousness. His death was for us too. **Fleming Rutledge**

FASTING

Pause and ask God what he would have you fast from this week: meals, social media, being critical, television, etc.

PAUSE and acknowledge God’s presence with you. As you read the passages, imagine yourself in these events. What would you think, feel, and desire if you were Barabbas or the crowd or Jesus?

READ SCRIPTURE

Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.” **Luke 23:43**

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. 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.

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. **Matthew 27:15-31**

- ▶ **ASK** God what do you want to say to me? What do you want me to see? What do you want me to believe? What do you want me to do?
- ▶ **LISTEN** for God’s word to you from Scripture and the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ **OBEY** What is God inviting you to? What will you do today to apply this to your life?
- ▶ **WORSHIP JESUS** for all he has revealed to you about himself.

NOTES

PAUSE and acknowledge God's presence with you. Thank him for seeing you and being with you.

READ SCRIPTURE

Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." **Luke 23:43**

Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going."

Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." **John 14:1-7**

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God’s plan is not to abandon this world, the world which he said was “very good.” Rather, he intends to remake it. And when he does, he will raise all his people to new bodily life to live in it. That is the promise of the Christian gospel.

NT Wright

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READ SCRIPTURE

Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.” **Luke 23:43**

Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life ...

I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it ...

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. **Revelation 21:1-6, 22-26; 22:1-5**

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READ SCRIPTURE

Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." **Luke 23:43**

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good ...

At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone. **Titus 2:11-14; 3:3-8**

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In God's new world Jesus will be the central figure. That's why from the very beginning the church has always spoken of his "second coming," though in terms of the overlap of heaven and earth it would be more appropriate to speak of the "reappearing" of Jesus. He is, at the moment, present with us, but hidden behind that invisible veil which keeps heaven and earth apart, and which we pierce in those moments, such as prayer, the sacraments, the reading of Scripture, and our work with the poor, when the veil seems particularly thin. But one day the veil will be lifted; earth and heaven will be one; Jesus will be personally present, and every knee shall bow at his name; creation will be renewed; the dead will be raised; and God's new world will at last be in place, full of new prospects and possibilities. This is what the Christian vision of salvation is all about. *NT Wright*

PAUSE and acknowledge God's presence with you. Thank him for seeing you and being with you.

READ SCRIPTURE

Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." **Luke 23:43**

The Word (God) became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son (Jesus), who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'") Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known. **John 1:14-18**

Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. **2 Corinthians 3:12-18**

- ▶ **ASK** God what do you want to say to me? What do you want me to see? What do you want me to believe? What do you want me to do?
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- ▶ **OBEY** What is God inviting you to? What will you do today to apply this to your life?
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NOTES

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READ SCRIPTURE

Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." **Luke 23:43**

*For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body ... Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends! **Philippians 3:18-21, 4:1***

For God has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son (Jesus) he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. **Colossians 1:13-18; 3:1-4***

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NOTES

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Paradise: Luke 23:32-33, 39-43

- What do you notice about these two men in this passage?
- What does this teach us about Jesus?
- How does this promise of paradise with Jesus inform how we live today?

Weekly Reflections from the Daily Devotionals

- Which passage of scripture was most impactful for you this week?
- What did you sense God saying to you this week?
- Where did you sense God's invitation to do or stop doing something this week?
- How did something from the devotionals speak into a particular moment of your life this week?

WEEK THREE

FAMILY

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

John 19:25-27



What is happening in this word from the cross (John 19:26-27) . . . is not about being nice to your mother. It is about the new community that comes into being through the power of Jesus. We often hear people say they can be religious without going to church . . . But the Christian community has a quality that the critiques do not take into consideration. When it is working the way it is supposed to, people are brought together who have absolutely nothing in common, who may have diametrically different views on things, who may even actively dislike each other . . . In giving his mother to the disciple, Jesus is causing a new relationship to come into existence that did not exist before . . . the disciple and mother represent the way that family ties are transcended in the church by the ties of the Spirit . . . Jesus is calling people into a new relationship with him and with one another.

Fleming Rutledge

FASTING

Pause and ask God what he would have you fast from this week: meals, social media, being critical, television, etc.

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READ SCRIPTURE

*When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said, "They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment." So this is what the soldiers did. Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. **John 19:23-27***

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READ SCRIPTURE

*...and to the disciple (Jesus said), "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. **John 19:27***

*While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." **Matthew 12:46-50***

*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. **Colossians 3:12-17***

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READ SCRIPTURE

*...and to the disciple (Jesus said), "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. **John 19:27***

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved ...

*All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need. **Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35***

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READ SCRIPTURE

...and to the disciple (Jesus said), "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. **John 19:27**

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

*Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. **Romans 12:3-21***

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READ SCRIPTURE

...and to the disciple (Jesus said), "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. John 19:27

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.

After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said, "No, you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." Simon Peter replied, "Then, Lord, not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not everyone was clean.

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. John 13:1-17

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READ SCRIPTURE

...and to the disciple (Jesus said), "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. **John 19:27**

*Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! **Philippians 2:1-8***

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NOTES

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Family: John 19:25-27

- What do you notice about Jesus in this passage?
- What does this event teach us about caring for one another?
- Who are the vulnerable in your community that need to be cared for?
- How might you join in caring for those close to you who are vulnerable?

Weekly Reflections from the Daily Devotionals

- Which passage of scripture was most impactful for you this week?
- What did you sense God saying to you this week?
- Where did you sense God's invitation to do or stop doing something this week?
- How did something from the devotionals speak into a particular moment of your life this week?

WEEK FOUR

FORSAKEN

At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” (Which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). When some of those standing near heard this, they said, “Listen, he’s calling Elijah.” Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to take him down,” he said. With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, “Surely this man was the Son of God!”

Mark 15:33-39



God could quite justly have abandoned us to our fate. He could have left us alone to reap the fruit of our wrongdoing and to perish in our sins. It is what we deserved. But he did not. Because he loved us, he came after us in Christ. He pursued us even to the desolate anguish of the cross, where he bore our sins, guilt, judgement, and death. It takes a hard and stony heart to remain unmoved by love like that. **John Stott**

For many centuries, Christians believed that there was such a thing as Sin. Using this word with a capital “S” is a way of indicating that Sin is not a misdeed here and a misdeed there, but an autonomous, enslaving Power. The Apostle Paul is very clear about this: “All human beings are under the power of sin” (Romans 3:9). In our time, however, we have done our best to get rid of this idea ... (But) sin has a grip on you that you cannot break. Only the power of God is greater than the power of Sin. In the Cross of Christ, he has broken it. Now we are being remade, in spite of our worst selves, into his image. **Fleming Rutledge**

FASTING

Pause and ask God what he would have you fast from this week: meals, social media, being critical, television, etc.

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READ SCRIPTURE

*At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” (Which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). When some of those standing near heard this, they said, “Listen, he’s calling Elijah.” Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to take him down,” he said. With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, “Surely this man was the Son of God!” **Mark 15:33-39***

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READ SCRIPTURE

Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" **Mark 15:34**

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit. **Galatians 3:13-14**

God made him (Jesus) who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. **2 Corinthians 5:21**

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. **Romans 5:8-11**

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READ SCRIPTURE

Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" **Mark 15:34**

But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. **Romans 3:21-26**

When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. "He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed." For "you were like sheep going astray," but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. **1 Peter 2:23-25**

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Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" **Mark 15:34**

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace...

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Romans 6:1-14, 22-23**

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READ SCRIPTURE

Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" **Mark 15:34**

Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

Surely, he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

Therefore, I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. **Isaiah 53 (A prophecy about Jesus)**

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READ SCRIPTURE

Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" **Mark 15:34**

Jesus said, "Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

Therefore, Jesus said again, "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father." **John 10:1-18**

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NOTES

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Forsaken: Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:33-39

- What is your experience with lamenting to God and expressing your most honest sorrow?
- What does this passage teach us about Jesus?
- Have you had times of feeling distant or forsaken by God? What helped you draw close to God?

Weekly Reflections from the Daily Devotionals

- Which passage of scripture was most impactful for you this week?
- What did you sense God saying to you this week?
- Where did you sense God's invitation to do or stop doing something this week?
- How did something from the devotionals speak into a particular moment of your life this week?

WEEK FIVE

THIRSTY

Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips.

John 19:28-29



It is significant that John's gospel records the words of Jesus, "I am thirsty." John carries the theme of water and thirst throughout his writing. He also chooses to emphasize God's sovereignty, control, and victorious death in the crucifixion, connecting Jesus's thirst to fulfillment of Scripture. We'll explore all these themes this week.

”

...when the Lord Jesus says "I thirst," he is speaking in this case not from his very real mortal weakness, but from his sovereign control of his own mission. This is the Son of God speaking, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Even in the midst of his helpless condition, he is manifestly aware of his divine destiny ... The Crucifixion is not an accident, not a mistake, not an unfortunate slip-up. It is the deliberate self-offering of the Good Shepherd (who said "I lay down my life for my sheep; no one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord). So when Jesus says "I thirst," it is to show that he is fulfilling his purpose according to the plan of God from the beginning.. *Fleming Rutledge*

FASTING

Pause and ask God what he would have you fast from this week: meals, social media, being critical, television, etc.

PAUSE and acknowledge God's presence with you. Thank him for seeing you and being with you.

READ SCRIPTURE

*Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. **John 19:28-29***

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish?

My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, but I find no rest. Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the one Israel praises. In you our ancestors put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them. To you they cried out and were saved; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by everyone, despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads. "He trusts in the Lord," they say, "let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him."

*Roaring lions that tear their prey, open their mouths wide against me. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me. My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death. Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet. All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment. But you, Lord, do not be far from me. You are my strength; come quickly to help me ... For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help. **Psalms 22:1-8, 13-19, 24***

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READ SCRIPTURE

Video: The Water of Life (The Bible Project) - menlo.church/wateroflife



*Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." **John 19:28***

(Jesus) 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.) 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, 14 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."

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." She replied, "I have no husband." 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." 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." 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." **John 4:6-26***

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*Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. **John 19:28-29***

Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." They said, "Sir, always give us this bread."

*Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day." **John 6:32-40***

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READ SCRIPTURE

*Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." **John 19:28-29***

At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, "Isn't this the man (Jesus) they are trying to kill? Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Messiah? But we know where this man is from; when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from. Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, "Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own authority, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, but I know him because I am from him and he sent me." At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. Still, many in the crowd believed in him. They said, "When the Messiah comes, will he perform more signs than this man?" The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him. Jesus said, "I am with you for only a short time, and then I am going to the one who sent me. You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come." The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks? What did he mean when he said, 'You will look for me, but you will not find me,' and 'Where I am, you cannot come'?"

*On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. **John 7:25-39***

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READ SCRIPTURE

*Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." **John 19:28***

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

*This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. We accept human testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. Whoever believes in the Son of God accepts this testimony. Whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because they have not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. **1 John 5:1-13***

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READ SCRIPTURE

*Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." **John 19:28***

*The next day John (the baptizer) saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" **John 1:29***

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"

*Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?" I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. **Revelation 7:9-17***

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NOTES

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Thirsty: John 19:28-29, John 4:13-14

- What connection do you see between these two passages?
- How does the cross symbolize God's sacrificial love?
- How does Jesus's sacrifice and suffering lead us to live for God and others?

Weekly Reflections from the Daily Devotionals

- Which passage of scripture was most impactful for you this week?
- What did you sense God saying to you this week?
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WEEK SIX FINISHED

A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

John 19:29-30



“It is finished” (in the Greek) does not mean “it is over; this is the end; I’m done for.” It means “It is completed; it is perfected” ... Jesus is announcing that, at the precise moment when he seems to be defeated, he is actually the conqueror: Christus Victor. He has done what he came into the world to do, the word made flesh. In John 4:34, Jesus says, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me, to accomplish his work.” He now announces, “It is accomplished.” ... The purpose of the Lord’s sacrifice on the cross is laid out (in the beginning of John’s gospel): “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29, 35). **Fleming Rutledge**

FASTING

Pause and ask God what he would have you fast from this week: meals, social media, being critical, television, etc.

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READ SCRIPTURE

*A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. **John 19:29-30***

*The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.” Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ I have seen and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One.” The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!” **John 1:29-36***

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READ SCRIPTURE

*When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. **John 19:30***

"He shall then slaughter the goat for the sin offering for the people and take its blood behind the curtain and do with it as he did with the bull's blood: He shall sprinkle it on the atonement cover and in front of it. In this way he will make atonement for the Most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been. **Leviticus 16:15-16***

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. **Hebrews 2:14-18***

***Atonement:** The Hebrew word for atone (כִּפֹּר, *kaphar*) conveys the idea of covering, both in the sense of covering to hide and also covering for someone (i.e., not charging someone with an offense or penalty). Atonement for sin was (most often) made by sacrificing an unblemished animal ... The New Testament frames the Hebraic understanding of atonement around the person and work of Christ, centered especially on His death on a Roman cross.

The New Testament authors interpreted Christ's death as the once-and-for-all atonement event, fulfilling and surpassing all other means humans had previously relied on to atone for sin. Payments of money to the temple, incense, and all other forms of securing reconciliation with God are eclipsed by the cross. Even the sacrifices and atoning rituals of the first covenant are reinterpreted as having been effective only in light of Christ (Heb 9). Despite this radical interpretation of the means of atonement in the New Testament, much

of the theology surrounding the meaning of atonement remains the same. As in the Old Testament, sin remains a problem, alienating humans from God and leaving us in need of redemption (Rom 1:18–32). The New Testament authors often view Christ's death as a parallel to the Suffering Servant of Isaiah (compare Matt 8:17 and Isa 53:4) who carries the sins of many, lifts their iniquities, and is even referred to as a "guilt offering" (Isa 53:10–12; compare Lev 5:14–19). In keeping with the Old Testament, God is the initiator of atonement who provides a means for people to receive cleansing and enter into a relationship with him (John 3:16–17). Additionally, the cross is understood as an act of self-sacrificial obedience by Christ, enacted as a demonstration of the Father's love for sinful humanity (Rom 5:8). The New Testament employs a number of vivid metaphors to explain the atoning work of Christ: ransom, sacrifice, reconciliation, victory, and Second Adam.

The Lexham Bible Dictionary

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READ SCRIPTURE

*When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. **John 19:30***

*But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant ... For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Otherwise, Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. **Hebrews 9:11-15, 24-28***

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READ SCRIPTURE

*When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. **John 19:30***

*I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. **1 Timothy 2:1-6***

*Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. **Ephesians 5:1-2***

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READ SCRIPTURE

*When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. **John 19:30***

*Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. **Hebrews 10:19-25***

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*When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. **John 19:30***

*As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. **Ephesians 2:1-10***

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NOTES

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Finished: John 19:29-30

- What does it mean for you that Jesus knew his path to the cross and was willing to complete this work for each of us?
- What does this passage teach us about following Jesus daily?
- How does it impact you that God suffered and faced death for you?

Weekly Reflections from the Daily Devotionals

- Which passage of scripture was most impactful for you this week?
- What did you sense God saying to you this week?
- Where did you sense God's invitation to do or stop doing something this week?
- How did something from the devotionals speak into a particular moment of your life this week?

WEEK SEVEN

FATHER

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last. The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man."

Luke 23:44-47



I remember talking to (one of my theology professors) about great questions of life and death, and the struggle to believe and to make sense of things. His only child, a son, had been born when he and his wife were in their forties, and then they lost him to a rare disease when he was twenty-three. Out of his grief, this bereaved father said, “The Christian life is lived in between – in between My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” So in this last saying on the Cross, Luke is teaching us how to die and live. Because we, by faith are assimilated to Christ in his death, we also are assimilated to him in his life beyond death. In his suffering we find our redemption.

In his abandonment we find our acceptance. In his derelictions we find our salvation. And at last we are able to say even in the midst of doubt and perplexity, Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit, even as the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ said. **Fleming Rutledge**

FASTING

Pause and ask God what he would have you fast from this week: meals, social media, being critical, television, etc.

PAUSE and acknowledge God’s presence with you. Thank him for seeing you and being with you.

READ SCRIPTURE

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” When he had said this, he breathed his last. The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, “Surely this was a righteous man.”

*When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away. But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things. Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea, and he himself was waiting for the kingdom of God. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus’ body. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment. **Luke 23:44-56***

- ▶ **ASK** God what do you want to say to me? What do you want me to see? What do you want me to believe? What do you want me to do?
- ▶ **LISTEN** for God’s word to you from Scripture and the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ **OBEY** What is God inviting you to? What will you do today to apply this to your life?
- ▶ **WORSHIP JESUS** for all he has revealed to you about himself.

NOTES



It could be tempting to run quickly to the resurrection that we celebrate this Sunday, but we want to continue to reflect upon Jesus and put ourselves in his final days leading up to that life-altering, world-altering day.

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READ SCRIPTURE

*Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last. **Luke 23:46***

And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. They were delighted and agreed to give him money. He consented and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present. Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed ... When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfilment in the kingdom of God." After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table. The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed. But woe to that man who betrays him!" They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this.

*A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. You are those who have stood by me in my trials. And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death." Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me." **Luke 22:4-7, 14-34***

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READ SCRIPTURE

*Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last. **Luke 23:46***

Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation." While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, but Jesus asked him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

*When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, should we strike with our swords?" And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. But Jesus answered, "No more of this!" And he touched the man's ear and healed him. Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour—when darkness reigns." **Luke 22:39-53***

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READ SCRIPTURE

*Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last. **Luke 23:46***

Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him." But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said. A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." Peter replied, "Man, I am not!" About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean." Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

*The men who were guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him. They blindfolded him and demanded, "Prophesy! Who hit you?" 65 And they said many other insulting things to him. At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and the teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. "If you are the Messiah," they said, "tell us. Jesus answered, "If I tell you, you will not believe me, and if I asked you, you would not answer. But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God." They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied, "You say that I am." Then they said, "Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips." **Luke 22:54-71***

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READ SCRIPTURE

*Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last. **Luke 23:46***

Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Messiah, a king." So Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus replied, "You have said so." Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no basis for a charge against this man." But they insisted, "He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here." On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. When he learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform a sign of some sort. He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate. That day Herod and Pilate became friends—before this they had been enemies.

*Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, and said to them, "You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. Therefore, I will punish him and then release him." But the whole crowd shouted, "Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!" (Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city, and for murder.) Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. But they kept shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" For the third time he spoke to them: "Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore, I will have him punished and then release him." But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. So Pilate decided to grant their demand. He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will. **Luke 23:1-25***

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READ SCRIPTURE

Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last. **Luke 23:46**

As the soldiers led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus ... Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is God's Messiah, the Chosen One." The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself." There was a written notice above him, which read: this is the king of the jews. One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing

wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last. The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man." When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away. But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things. Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea, and he himself was waiting for the kingdom of God. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

Luke 23:26, 32-56

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NOTES

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Father: Luke 23:44-47

- What do you notice about Jesus when he speaks the words in this passage?
- What does this passage teach us about trusting God?
- What helps you remember that you are God's beloved child?

Weekly Reflections from the Daily Devotionals

- Which passage of scripture was most impactful for you this week?
- What did you sense God saying to you this week?
- Where did you sense God's invitation to do or stop doing something this week?
- How did something from the devotionals speak into a particular moment of your life this week?

EASTER—SUNDAY

READ SCRIPTURE

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: "The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again." Then they remembered his words.

When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him.

He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" He said, "What things?" The replied, "About Jesus of Nazareth. He was a

prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus."

He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

*When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God. **Luke 24***

Jesus said to (Martha), "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."

John 11:25-27

NOTES

