



Unity Baptist Church
Seeking Christ . Serving Christ . Sharing Christ

40 DAYS OF FASTING AND PRAYER

A Study and Prayer Guide
for Lent 2026

INTRODUCTION:

Entering the Journey of Lent

The word **Lent** comes from the Old English *lencten*, meaning “springtime.” It is related to the Old High German *lenzin*, also meaning “spring.” The connection is fitting—not only because Lent occurs in the weeks leading up to Easter, but because it is meant to be a season of renewal. Just as the earth thaws and blossoms after winter, Lent is an opportunity for the soul to awaken, to shed what is dead, and to grow toward the light of Christ.

Lent is a **40-day season of fasting, prayer, and repentance** from Ash Wednesday through Easter Sunday. This year, it will begin on **February 18** and will conclude on Sunday, **April 5**. The fast takes place every day except Sundays, because Sundays are meant to be days of feasting rather than fasting since it celebrates Christ’s resurrection.

The Origins of Lent: A Season of Preparation

The practice of fasting and preparation before Easter has ancient roots. While the specific structure of Lent was not formalized until the **First Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D.**, evidence suggests that a period of fasting before Easter was observed in some form since the earliest days of the church. In the early centuries, Lent served as a time for new believers to prepare for **baptism** and for those who had fallen into grievous sin to undergo **public penance** before being restored to full communion with the church. In the ninth century, the practice of public penance began to fade, and instead, **all believers were reminded of their need for repentance** through the imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday—a practice that continues today in many Christian traditions.

Lent is observed across many Christian denominations. It is most commonly practiced in the **Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, Episcopal, and Lutheran** churches, but it is also embraced by **Presbyterians, Methodists, and even some Baptists** as a season of spiritual renewal.

How is Lent Observed?

Lent is traditionally marked by **fasting, prayer, and almsgiving**—acts of self-denial and devotion meant to draw believers closer to God.

- In **Western churches**, Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and continues for 40 days, excluding Sundays.
- In **Eastern Orthodox churches**, Lent begins on the Monday of the seventh week before Easter and extends through the Friday before Palm Sunday, including Saturdays and Sundays as more relaxed fast days.

Historically, **fasting** during Lent was much stricter. Early Christians would eat only **one meal a day, in the evening**, and abstain from meat, fish, eggs, and dairy. Today, the Roman Catholic Church maintains only two required fast days—**Ash Wednesday and Good Friday**—but many Christians voluntarily **abstain from certain foods, activities, or habits** as a form of spiritual discipline. Some choose to give up **sweets, alcohol, social media, or other comforts**, using their moments of craving as reminders to turn to prayer.

Lent is meant to be a **season of spiritual sharpening, not legalistic restriction**. Unfortunately, in some places, this season of self-denial has been preceded by a season of indulgence—leading to traditions like **Carnaval and Mardi Gras**. The name *Carnaval* comes from the Latin

carne vale or *carne levare*, meaning “farewell to meat.” Likewise, *Mardi Gras* (French for “Fat Tuesday”) refers to the practice of feasting on rich foods before the 40-day fast begins. But Lent is not about making room for sin before repenting—it is about **reorienting our hearts to Christ’s lordship and our deep need for His grace.**

Why Are We Doing This?

The purpose of Lent is not to check a religious box, but to **draw near to Christ.** Fasting, prayer, and reflection help us to:

- Grow in our **awareness of our dependence on God.**
- Refocus our **minds and hearts on the Lord’s will.**
- Renew our **zeal and commitment** to follow Christ.
- Examine ourselves and recognize areas where we need repentance.
- Develop **self-control** and a deeper reliance on the Holy Spirit.
- Learn in a tangible way that “*man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God*” (Matthew 4:4).

For **40 days, we will fast and pray.** But what should that look like?

Fasting is a deeply personal discipline. Some may choose to give up a certain food or drink, while others may fast from distractions like **social media, television, or unnecessary spending.** The goal is not mere self-denial, but to **use the time and energy that would be spent on these things to focus more intentionally on God.** You may fast from food for one day, or multiple days, each week over the next 7 weeks, or you can choose something that you will miss and abstain from it from March 5 until April 20 (not including Sundays). Allow the cravings for that item—whether it be rumbling stomachs or fidgeting fingers—to draw your heart to the throne of God and to remind yourself of your need for him.

Prayer and **repentance** will be at the heart of this journey. This guide will help you engage in meaningful prayer each day—praying for yourself, your family, your church, your community, and the world.

What This Devotional Will Look Like

To help guide our reflections during Lent, this study follows a structured **daily devotional format**. Each day, you will find:

- **A Scripture Reading** – A short passage for meditation. While only a few verses are printed, I strongly encourage you to **read the surrounding context** to gain a fuller understanding.
- **A Devotional Reflection** – A brief but rich discussion of each passage to help you apply it to your own spiritual journey.
- **A Prayer Focus** – A suggested topic for intercession, guiding you to pray not just for yourself but for others.
- **A Prayer Prompt** – A written prayer to help shape your conversation with God, but feel free to add your own words.
- **A Spiritual Challenge** – A practical step to help you embody the truth of that day’s meditation.

Each week follows a specific theme:

- **Week 1:** The Wilderness—Repentance and Preparation
- **Week 2:** The Call to Follow—Discipleship and Transformation
- **Week 3:** Seeking the Father’s face—Prayer and Communion
- **Week 4:** Loving Your Neighbor—Compassion and Justice
- **Week 5:** The Cross and the Cost—Suffering and Perseverance
- **Week 6:** The Kingdom and the King—Humility and Lordship
- **Week 7:** The Passion—Sacrifice and Redemption

These reflections are designed not only to guide us through Lent but also to **establish a rhythm of devotion that extends beyond these 40 days**. Regular time in Scripture, prayer, and meditation is essential for the Christian life, and my hope is that this structure will serve as a **model for daily spiritual formation** in the months and years ahead.

Preparing for the Journey

Lent is not about proving our holiness. It is about recognizing our need for grace and walking in deeper dependence on Christ. As we begin this journey, we encourage you to **prayerfully consider what God is calling you to lay down**—and more importantly, what He is calling you to take up. May this season of fasting, prayer, and reflection awaken our hearts to the wonder of the gospel, the depth of Christ’s love, and the hope of resurrection that awaits us.

Let’s begin.

Grace and Peace,
Thiago Monteiro Bitencourt
Pastor at Unity Baptist Church
Youngsville, North Carolina

**WEEK 1: THE CALL TO FOLLOW—
DISCIPLESHIP AND TRANSFORMATION**

(February 23 - February 28, 2026)

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23
– THE CALL OF THE FIRST DISCIPLES**

Scripture Reading: Matthew 4:18-22

Devotional Reflection:

When Jesus calls Peter, Andrew, James, and John, His words are simple yet radical: “Follow me.” They leave everything—family, livelihood, security—to walk with Christ. Discipleship is not a side project; it’s an all-encompassing transformation. The same call comes to us today. Following Jesus is costly, but the reward is greater: life in the presence of the King.

Prayer Focus: A deeper commitment to following Jesus wholeheartedly.

Prayer Prompt: O Lord, shake me from my complacency. Strip away my hesitations and distractions. Make my heart ready to abandon all for the surpassing joy of knowing You. Let me see Your worth so clearly that every earthly treasure dims in comparison. Lead me where You will, and I will follow. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Identify one area where you hold back from fully following Christ. Surrender it in prayer today. Remind yourself of the reward that awaits all who follow Christ.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24
– DENYING SELF AND TAKING UP THE CROSS

Scripture Reading: Luke 9:21-27

Devotional Reflection:

Jesus does not call us to comfortable discipleship but to a life of surrender. To follow Him means to take up our cross daily, dying to self-will and worldly desires. In losing our lives for His sake, we find true life. Lent challenges us to ask: What am I clinging to that hinders full devotion to Christ?

Prayer Focus: Strength to embrace self-denial for the sake of Christ.

Prayer Prompt: Father, the cross is heavy, and my flesh is weak. But You are strong. Give me the resolve to deny myself, to lay down my fleeting desires, and to treasure Christ above all. Make me bold in surrender, fearless in love, and unwavering in devotion. May I find my life by losing it in You. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: What cross has Jesus called you to bear? Remind yourself that one day you will exchange the cross for a crown. Is your load too heavy? Remember You are not alone. Reach out to a brother or sister in Christ to help you carry your burden. Is there some one that needs your help?

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25
– LEAVING EVERYTHING BEHIND

Scripture Reading: Luke 5:27-32

Devotional Reflection:

Levi, a tax collector, was an outcast, yet Jesus called him. Without hesitation, Levi left everything behind and followed. His response was immediate and complete. The Christian life is one of continual surrender—a letting go of all that would keep us from full communion with Christ. He is worth it all.

Prayer Focus: Courage to surrender what holds us back from following Jesus.

Prayer Prompt: Jesus, You call the unlikely, the broken, the sinners like me. Let me not hesitate when You summon me to deeper faithfulness. Break my grip on what is temporary. Make me willing, make me joyful, make me Yours. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Consider what Jesus may be calling you to leave behind. Take one step toward obedience today.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26
– THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

Scripture Reading: Luke 14:25-35

Devotional Reflection:

Jesus speaks plainly: to follow Him is to count the cost. Discipleship is not about convenience but about surrendering all—even our dearest affections if they stand in the way of full obedience. Do we see Christ as worthy of our everything?

Prayer Focus: Willingness to count the cost of following Christ.

Prayer Prompt: Lord, shake me from shallow discipleship. Let me not seek a faith that costs me nothing. Show me the treasure of Christ so fully that all else fades. Give me courage to forsake whatever competes with my love for You. Let me count the cost and still say, "You are worthy."
Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Reflect on what it means to count the cost of following Jesus. What sacrifices might He be calling you to make? Those who lose their life for Christ will gain it!

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27
– ABIDING IN CHRIST

Scripture Reading: John 15:1-8

Devotional Reflection:

To be a disciple is to abide—to remain deeply connected to Christ, drawing life from Him as a branch from the vine. Apart from Him, we can do nothing. Lent is a time to root ourselves more deeply in Him, allowing His Word to prune us and His Spirit to sustain us.

Prayer Focus: A deeper abiding in Christ through Word and Spirit.

Prayer Prompt: Father, let my soul thirst for You. Draw me near, and let me drink deeply from the well of Your presence. Prune what is unfruitful in me. Let my life bear the mark of one who abides in Christ, that Your glory may be seen. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Spend extra time today in Scripture and prayer, seeking to abide more fully in Christ.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28
– BEARING THE FRUIT OF DISCIPLESHIP

Scripture Reading: Galatians 5:22-25

Devotional Reflection:

True discipleship bears fruit. The Spirit at work in us produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These are the marks of a life transformed by Christ. As we walk in step with the Spirit, we display His character to the world. Fruitfulness comes by following the Spirit instead of the flesh.

Prayer Focus: That our lives would bear the fruit of the Spirit.

Prayer Prompt: Lord, let Your Spirit move mightily in me. Let love conquer my selfishness, joy overcome my sorrow, peace quiet my anxieties. Let kindness be my language, faithfulness my anchor, and self-control my guard. Make my life a living testimony to the power of Christ. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Examine your life in light of the fruit of the Spirit. Which area needs growth? Ask God to cultivate it in you.

Today is the end of week 2. Continue in your fast. Don't give up and don't give in. The Lord is with you, He will keep you.

WEEK 3: SEEKING THE FATHER'S FACE

—PRAYER AND COMMUNION

(March 2 - March 7, 2026)

MONDAY, MARCH 2

– THE LORD'S PRAYER: A MODEL FOR OUR HEARTS

Scripture Reading: Matthew 6:5-15

Devotional Reflection:

When Jesus' disciples asked Him how to pray, He didn't give them a formula—He gave them a relationship. “Our Father in heaven...” From the very first words, He draws us into intimacy with God, not as distant subjects but as beloved children. This prayer is both simple and weighty. It aligns our hearts with the Father's purposes—His name to be hallowed, His kingdom to come, His will to be done. It invites us to trust Him for our daily needs, seek His forgiveness as we forgive others, and rely on Him to lead us through temptation. Every petition shapes us, drawing us deeper into dependence on the God who hears.

Prayer Focus: That we would pray as children who trust the Father completely.

Prayer Prompt: Father, teach me to pray. Let my heart be shaped by the priorities of Your kingdom. Make my desires align with Yours. Give me faith to ask, boldness to seek, and persistence to knock, knowing that You delight to give good gifts to Your children. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Pray the Lord's Prayer slowly, pausing at each line to reflect on its meaning for your life today. Try to memorize the Lord's prayer, if you haven't already

TUESDAY, MARCH 3
– IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Scripture Reading: Matthew 11:20-30

Devotional Reflection:

Jesus lifts His eyes to heaven and rejoices: “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth...” He reveals a profound truth—God’s deepest wisdom is hidden from the self-sufficient and revealed to the childlike. Prayer is not an intellectual exercise; it is the language of those who depend entirely on the Father’s love. And so He invites us: “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” The world burdens us with performance and striving, but in Christ, we find a yoke that is easy, a burden that is light. Prayer is not just speaking; it is resting in the presence of the One who carries what we cannot.

Prayer Focus: That weary hearts would find rest in the presence of Jesus.

Prayer Prompt: Lord Jesus, I come to You, tired and burdened. Let me lay down my striving. Teach me to pray not as a duty but as a delight. Let me rest in Your presence, knowing that You carry what I cannot. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Set aside five minutes of silence and solitude today—no requests, no words, just resting in God’s presence.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4
– GLORIFY THE SON

Scripture Reading: John 17:1-8

Devotional Reflection:

As Jesus prepares for the cross, He lifts His eyes to heaven and prays, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You.” The cross, which looks like shame and defeat to the world, is in reality the place of glory. Through it, the Son accomplishes His mission—to give eternal life to all whom the Father has given Him. Jesus defines eternal life not merely as endless existence but as knowing God. This is the essence of prayer—not just asking, but knowing. True prayer is communion with the Father through the Son, entering into the relationship that existed before time began.

Prayer Focus: That our prayer lives would be marked by a desire for God’s glory.

Prayer Prompt: Father, glorify Your Son in my life. Let my prayers not be self-centered but God-centered. Teach me that eternal life is not just a future promise but a present reality—knowing You, loving You, abiding in You. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: As you pray today, begin by praising God before making any requests. Praise God through song if you’d like.

THURSDAY, MARCH 5
– JESUS PRAYS FOR HIS PEOPLE

Scripture Reading: John 17:9-26

Devotional Reflection:

On the night before His death, Jesus prays—not only for His disciples but for all who would believe in Him through their word. That means He prayed for you.

He asks the Father to keep us in His name, to protect us from the evil one, to sanctify us in the truth. But above all, He prays for unity—that we may be one, just as He and the Father are one. This is no shallow unity, but a deep, Spirit-wrought oneness that testifies to the world that the Father has sent the Son.

Prayer Focus: That the church would be united in Christ, displaying His love to the world.

Prayer Prompt: Lord Jesus, You prayed for us before we even knew You. Make us one as You and the Father are one. Let Your church be marked not by division but by love. And let the world see, through our unity, that You are the Savior. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Reach out to a fellow believer and encourage them with a word of prayer today. Give thanks to God for you local church family.

FRIDAY, MARCH 6
– BOWING BEFORE THE FATHER

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 3:14-21

Devotional Reflection:

Paul falls to his knees before the Father, overwhelmed by the vastness of God's love. He prays that the church would be strengthened with power, rooted and grounded in love, able to comprehend the immeasurable breadth, length, height, and depth of Christ's love.

This is the heart of prayer—not mere requests, but the deepening of our souls in the knowledge of God's love. The more we grasp His love, the more we are filled with His fullness. And when we are filled with Him, we cannot help but overflow into the world around us.

Prayer Focus: That we would be strengthened to grasp the love of Christ more deeply.

Prayer Prompt: Father, root me in Your love. Strengthen me to comprehend what is beyond comprehension. Let me not settle for small prayers when You are able to do far more abundantly than all I ask or think. Fill me with all Your fullness. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Meditate on the love of Christ today—write down ways you have experienced His love.

SATURDAY, MARCH 7
– THE LORD HEARS

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 38:1-8

Devotional Reflection:

King Hezekiah, faced with the certainty of death, turns his face to the wall and prays. He weeps before the Lord, and before Isaiah even leaves the palace, God answers: “I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears.”

This is the God we serve—a God who hears, who sees, who responds. Prayer is not shouting into the void; it is a conversation with the living God. He may not always answer as we expect, but He always hears. And His purposes for His people are always good.

Prayer Focus: That those who feel unheard by God would be reassured of His nearness.

Prayer Prompt: Father, You hear. You see. You know. Let those who feel abandoned find comfort in Your presence. Let them know that their prayers do not fall on deaf ears, but are received by a Father who loves them. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Take time today to thank God for past prayers He has answered. You make it to the end of week 3. Congratulations! You are almost half way. Don't give up and don't give in. The Lord is good, and He will continue to uphold you.

WEEK 4: LOVING YOUR NEIGHBOR
—COMPASSION AND JUSTICE
(March 9 - March 14, 2024)

MONDAY, MARCH 9
– THE GOOD SAMARITAN: A CALL TO MERCY

Scripture Reading: Luke 10:25-37

Devotional Reflection:

A lawyer asks Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?” In response, Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan. The priest and the Levite pass by the wounded man, but the Samaritan stops, showing compassion across cultural and social divides. True love is costly, inconvenient, and self-giving. Lent is a time to examine our hearts: Do we love only when it is easy, or are we willing to reflect the mercy of Christ even when it requires sacrifice? Christ gave himself for us so that we can give ourselves for others in his name.

Prayer Focus: A heart of compassion and willingness to love beyond convenience.

Prayer Prompt: Lord, let my heart not be like the priest or the Levite, looking away from those in need. Make me a vessel of Your mercy. Open my eyes to see and my hands to serve, that I may love my neighbor as You have loved me. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Find an opportunity today to extend kindness to someone in need, whether through an act of service, encouragement, or generosity. As you minister to them use that as an opportunity to speak about the love of God in Christ.

TUESDAY, MARCH 10
– LOVING ENEMIES: A RADICAL CALL

Scripture Reading: Matthew 5:43-48

Devotional Reflection:

Jesus commands us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. This love is not mere tolerance but active goodwill rooted in the gospel. As Christ loved us while we were yet sinners, we are called to reflect His grace even to those who wrong us. True discipleship means embracing a love that defies human nature and points to the supernatural work of Christ in us. True love is based on God's love for us, not on the worth of the person we are called to love.

Prayer Focus: A heart free from bitterness and filled with Christlike love.

Prayer Prompt: Father, You loved me when I was unworthy, and You call me to do the same. Kill the roots of resentment in my soul. Teach me to love, not by my own strength, but by the power of Your Spirit. Let me be a light of grace in a world of vengeance. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Identify someone you struggle to love. Pray for them today, asking God to bless them and transform your heart toward them.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11
– SERVING THE LEAST OF THESE

Scripture Reading: Matthew 25:31-46

Devotional Reflection:

Jesus declares that whatever we do for the least of these, we do for Him. True faith expresses itself in action—feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, and caring for the sick and imprisoned. Lent calls us to move beyond sentiment into tangible acts of mercy. Christ identifies with the suffering; will we? Every deed of love done in the name of Jesus will return to you.

Prayer Focus: Eyes to see Jesus in the broken and hurting.

Prayer Prompt: Lord Jesus, You were poor, hungry, and rejected, yet You are the King of glory. Open my heart to see You in those who suffer. Make me a servant, not for my glory but for Yours, that in my small acts of love, Your name may be known. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Find a way to serve someone in need today—volunteer, give generously, or spend time with or call someone who feels forgotten. Regardless of who you are and of your level of abilities, you can serve someone today.

THURSDAY, MARCH 12
– JUSTICE AND MERCY IN THE PROPHETS

Scripture Reading: Micah 6:6-8; Isaiah 58:1-14

Devotional Reflection:

God does not desire empty religious rituals but a heart that loves justice, kindness, and humility. Lent is a season to reflect on how we live out our faith beyond personal devotion—do we stand for justice? Do we walk humbly before God? The cross is where justice and mercy meet, and we are called to embody both in our lives.

Prayer Focus: A heart that seeks justice and walks in humility.

Prayer Prompt: O Lord, let me not be satisfied with mere words or rituals. Shape my heart to reflect Your justice and mercy. Teach me to love what You love and to walk humbly in Your ways. Let my life bear witness to Your righteousness. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Research a justice issue that aligns with the heart of God—poverty, human trafficking, racial reconciliation, abortion, adoption, fostering. Pray for the one that burdens your heart. Take one action step to engage with it.

FRIDAY, MARCH 13
– THE COST OF COMPASSION

Scripture Reading: Philippians 2:1-13

Devotional Reflection:

Love is not an emotion or a feeling. Love is an action—a choice. Christ’s compassion was not sentimental; it led Him to the cross. True love is costly. It means lowering ourselves, serving, and sacrificing for others. The world teaches us to seek power; Jesus teaches us to empty ourselves for the sake of love. Lent calls us to follow the downward path of Christ, where true exaltation is found in servanthood.

Prayer Focus: A willingness to embrace the humility of Christ.

Prayer Prompt: Jesus, You emptied Yourself, taking the form of a servant, humbling Yourself to death. Make me like You. Crush my pride, my entitlement, my self-seeking heart. Let me serve as You served, love as You loved, and lay down my life in joyful surrender. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Identify an area where pride hinders your ability to love and serve. Confess it to God and turn away from it. Choose an act of humility today.

SATURDAY, MARCH 14
– THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

Scripture Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

Devotional Reflection:

The gospel is a message of reconciliation—God reconciling the world to Himself through Christ, and calling us to be agents of that reconciliation. Our mission is to embody His peace, bridging divides, and healing broken relationships. In a world of division, the church is called to be a beacon of unity, showing what the kingdom of God looks like. Our mission is to serve Christ and to call others to do the same.

Prayer Focus: A heart committed to being a reconciler in a divided world.

Prayer Prompt: Father, make me an ambassador of Christ. Let me not be content with broken relationships or division. Fill me with the love that breaks down walls, heals wounds, and restores what is lost. Use me to bring peace where there is strife, that the world may see You. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Seek reconciliation in a strained relationship. Take the first step in humility and grace. Who is God calling you to tell about Jesus?

This is the end of week 4! Congratulations for making it this far. Keep pressing on. Stay firm in the fasting commitment you made. Don't give up and don't give in. It will be worth it.

WEEK 5: THE CROSS AND THE COST
—SUFFERING AND PERSEVERANCE
(March 16- March 21, 2026)

MONDAY, MARCH 16
– THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM

Scripture Reading: Luke 9:51-62

Devotional Reflection:

Jesus "set His face to go to Jerusalem," knowing full well what awaited Him there. He did not shrink back from suffering but embraced the Father's will with unwavering resolve. True discipleship means walking this same road, surrendering our comforts and security for the sake of the Kingdom. Lent reminds us that suffering is not an obstacle to God's plan but the very means through which His glory is revealed. Will we trust Him when the road leads to hardship?

Prayer Focus: Strength to embrace the path of Christ, even when it leads to suffering.

Prayer Prompt: Lord Jesus, You walked the road of suffering before me, and now You call me to follow. Strengthen my trembling heart. Make me steadfast in trial, joyful in endurance, and confident in the Father's perfect plan. Let my life be a testimony of trust in You. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Identify an area in your life where you resist hardship. Ask God for the strength to surrender. God is calling you to go beyond your comfort zone and trust Him.

TUESDAY, MARCH 17
– THE LAMB WHO WAS SLAIN AND VICTORIOUS

Scripture Reading: Revelation 5:1-14

Devotional Reflection:

In John's vision, he weeps because no one is found worthy to open the scroll. But then, he sees the Lamb who was slain—Jesus, both suffering and victorious. The paradox of the cross is fully displayed: the one who was slain now reigns. His victory was not through force but through sacrifice. Lent calls us to this same paradox, where we share in Christ's sufferings so that we may also share in His glory. The cross is not the end of the story. The Lamb has overcome, and in Him, so shall we.

Prayer Focus: Those who are suffering, that they may find hope in Christ's victory.

Prayer Prompt: Lord Jesus, You are the Lamb who was slain, and yet You reign in triumph. In our suffering, remind us that victory belongs to You. Strengthen those who are weary, lift those who are burdened, and let the song of redemption rise in our hearts. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Meditate on Christ's victory through suffering. How does His triumph shape the way you endure hardships?

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18
– SHARING IN CHRIST’S SUFFERINGS

Scripture Reading: Philippians 3:1-21

Devotional Reflection:

Paul’s desire was not just to know Christ but to share in His sufferings, to be conformed to His death, so that he might also share in His resurrection. This is the paradox of the Gospel—suffering in Christ leads to glory in Christ. Lent invites us into this mystery: to see trials not as meaningless affliction but as participation in the very life of Jesus. Are we willing to follow Him even here?

Prayer Focus: Those enduring trials for the sake of Christ—praying for perseverance and joy.

Prayer Prompt: Father, when suffering comes, let me not shrink back. Give me eyes to see Christ in the pain, faith to trust Your purpose, and a heart that rejoices even in affliction. Make me one who bears the marks of Jesus with joy. Bless those who are suffering for your sake even now. Give them strength, boldness and confidence in you. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Reflect on how suffering has shaped your faith. Write down ways God has used trials for your good.

THURSDAY, MARCH 19
– THE SUFFERING SERVANT

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 52:17

Devotional Reflection:

Isaiah's prophecy paints a picture of the suffering Servant—despised, rejected, and crushed for our iniquities. This is Jesus, willingly bearing our griefs, taking the full weight of sin upon Himself. We often long for a triumphant Savior, but Lent reminds us that glory comes through suffering. The cross was no accident; it was the plan of redemption unfolding in divine love.

Prayer Focus: A deeper appreciation of Christ's sacrificial love.

Prayer Prompt: O Jesus, Man of Sorrows, You bore my grief, carried my shame, took my punishment. Let me never grow numb to the wonder of the cross. Let me weep over my sin, yet rejoice in Your redeeming love. Transform my heart through Your sacrifice. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Meditate on Isaiah 53 and write a personal response of gratitude for Christ's suffering.

FRIDAY, MARCH 20
– ENDURANCE IN THE FACE OF PERSECUTION

Scripture Reading: 2 Corinthians 4:1-12

Devotional Reflection:

Paul describes believers as "jars of clay," fragile yet carrying the immeasurable treasure of the Gospel. Afflicted but not crushed. Persecuted but not forsaken. This is the pattern of the cross—life through death, strength through weakness. The world may reject us, but Christ holds us fast. Will we endure for His sake?

Prayer Focus: Believers suffering persecution around the world.

Prayer Prompt: Lord of the suffering saints, uphold Your people who bear reproach for Your name. Strengthen them with unshakable joy, sustain them with Your presence. And if the day comes when I must stand firm, let me not waver but rejoice that I am counted worthy to suffer for You. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Research a persecuted church community and commit to praying for them this week. Visit Voice of the Martyr's website <https://www.persecution.com/> and read stories of brothers and sisters who are suffering for Christ right now. Pray for them. Consider supporting them.

SATURDAY, MARCH 21
– VICTORY THROUGH THE CROSS

Scripture Reading: Colossians 2:13-15

Devotional Reflection:

The cross looked like defeat, but it was the greatest victory. In His death, Christ disarmed the powers of darkness, nailing our debt to the tree. Every accusation against us is silenced in His blood. Lent is a journey to the cross, but it is not a journey of despair—it is a march toward triumph. We follow a crucified King, and in Him, we share in His victory.

Prayer Focus: Hope in the power of the cross to transform lives and overcome evil.

Prayer Prompt: O Christ, conquering King, let me live in the victory of Your cross. Let no guilt remain, no fear endure, no sin reign. You have triumphed, and I am Yours forever. Let my life declare the power of Your name. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Share the message of Christ's victory with someone who needs encouragement today.

This is the end of week 5. You are more than half way through. Continue looking to Christ, who for the Joy that was before Him, endured the cross, despised the shame, and is now seated at the right hand of the majesty on high (Hebrews 12:2-4)

**WEEK 6: THE KINGDOM AND THE KING
—HUMILITY AND LORDSHIP**

(March 23 – March 28, 2026)

MONDAY, MARCH 23

– THE HUMBLE KING ENTERS JERUSALEM

Scripture Reading: Zechariah 9:9-17

Devotional Reflection:

Zechariah’s prophecy presents a striking vision of the Messiah: a King, but not one who arrives with military might. Instead, He comes humbly, riding on a donkey. Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem fulfills this image perfectly—He is the King, but His kingdom is unlike any other. The world seeks power in dominance, but Christ rules through humility and sacrifice. True allegiance to this King requires surrendering our own desires for control and trusting in His gentle rule. Will we welcome Him on His terms or insist on our own?

Prayer Focus: That leaders would embrace humility and seek wisdom from God.

Prayer Prompt: Lord Jesus, You are the King who comes in humility, not in worldly splendor. Teach our leaders to walk in Your ways, to serve rather than to be served, to seek wisdom rather than control. May Your kingdom come through their faithfulness. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Reflect on how you expect Jesus to rule in your life. Are you willing to receive Him on His terms? Where have you been called to lead? Lead in humility.

TUESDAY, MARCH 24

– THE GREATEST AMONG YOU SHALL BE YOUR SERVANT

Scripture Reading: Matthew 23:1-12

Devotional Reflection:

The world teaches us to seek greatness through position and power. Jesus flips this upside down: in His kingdom, true greatness is found in servanthood. The religious leaders of His day sought honor for themselves, but Jesus calls us to something different. Lent is a time to examine our hearts—where do we seek recognition rather than servanthood? To follow Christ means embracing humility, knowing that the lowest place in His kingdom is higher than the greatest place in this world.

Prayer Focus: That our hearts and the hearts of our leaders would be marked by humility.

Prayer Prompt: Father, strip away the pride that clings to us. Teach us to serve, to seek the good of others above our own. May our leaders reflect Your servant heart, lifting up the weak rather than exalting themselves. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Find one way to serve someone today without seeking recognition.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25
– MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD

Scripture Reading: John 18:28-40

Devotional Reflection:

As Jesus stands before Pilate, He declares that His kingdom is not of this world. His rule does not come through conquest or political force but through truth. Pilate, like so many, struggles to grasp this reality. We, too, are tempted to tie our faith to earthly power structures, forgetting that Jesus' reign is of an entirely different nature. This Lent, we must ask: Are we aligning ourselves with Christ's kingdom, or are we hoping He will align with ours?

Prayer Focus: That leaders would seek truth over personal or political gain.

Prayer Prompt: Lord, Your kingdom is not of this world, yet we so often try to mold it into our own image. Give our leaders hearts that long for truth over power, justice over self-interest. Shape us all into citizens of Your eternal reign. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Evaluate where your loyalties lie—do you seek Christ's kingdom above all else? Or are you aligning yourself more with the kingdom of men? If you have been seeking the kingdom of men over the kingdom of Christ, confess this to God and repent.

THURSDAY, MARCH 26
– THE KING WHO SERVES

Scripture Reading: John 13:1-17

Devotional Reflection:

On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus does something unthinkable. He kneels before His disciples—dusty-footed, weary men who still do not fully understand His mission—and washes their feet. The King of glory takes the position of the lowest servant. This act is more than humility; it is a picture of His entire mission. He came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). As we follow Him, we are called to the same radical humility—to lay down pride, to serve without status, and to love in ways that reflect the self-giving nature of our Lord.

Prayer Focus: That we would embrace Christ’s example of humble service in our daily lives.

Prayer Prompt: O Father, let the image of my Savior on His knees, towel in hand, be burned into my soul. Break the pride that seeks position, the fear that clings to self-preservation. Make me one who loves as You have loved—kneeling, serving, and pouring out for the sake of others. For in losing myself, I find the joy of Your kingdom. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Find a way to serve someone today in a hidden, humble way, expecting nothing in return.

FRIDAY, MARCH 27
– THE KING ON TRIAL

Scripture Reading: Mark 15:1-15

Devotional Reflection:

Jesus stands before Pilate, silent before His accusers. He is the rightful King, yet He does not defend Himself with force or argument. His kingdom operates not through coercion but through the quiet power of truth and love. As we meditate on His trial, we are reminded that following Christ means trusting in His ways, even when the world misunderstands. Will we have the courage to stand with Him in quiet faithfulness? Or will we, like Pilate, seek to please the crowd instead?

Prayer Focus: That leaders would govern with justice, not self-preservation.

Prayer Prompt: Lord, when You were falsely accused, You did not seek to save Yourself but entrusted all things to the Father. Teach our leaders to act with justice rather than self-interest, to seek truth rather than personal security. May they lead with integrity. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: In moments of misunderstanding, choose silence and trust in God rather than self-defense.

SATURDAY, MARCH 28
– THE COMING OF THE TRUE KING

Scripture Reading: Revelation 19:1-16

Devotional Reflection:

John's vision of Christ's return presents a breathtaking reality: the humble King who entered Jerusalem on a donkey will return in glory. His rule will be final, His justice perfect, His kingdom unshakable. Lent invites us to live in anticipation of this reality—to follow Christ in humility now, knowing that His victory is assured. The cross leads to the crown, and the King is coming. Are we ready?

Prayer Focus: That we would live with joyful expectation of Christ's return.

Prayer Prompt: Lord Jesus, You are coming again, and Your kingdom will have no end. Keep us faithful until that day, longing for Your justice, Your peace, and Your reign. May our leaders govern with the knowledge that You alone are the true King and they will one day answer to you. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Spend time today reflecting on Christ's return. How does it shape the way you live now?

You have made it to the end of week 6. Congratulations! Continue firm in your commitment. The Lord is faithful, He will provide.

WEEK 7: THE PASSION—SACRIFICE AND REDEMPTION
(March 30 – April 4, 2025)

MONDAY, MARCH 30
– THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY

Scripture Reading: John 12:1-8

Devotional Reflection:

As Jesus reclines at a table in Bethany, Mary approaches with a costly jar of perfume. Without hesitation, she breaks it and anoints Him, filling the house with its fragrance. It is an extravagant act of devotion—one that Judas immediately criticizes. But Jesus defends her: “She has done a beautiful thing... She has anointed my body beforehand for burial.” Mary understood what others missed. She saw the worth of Christ and poured out what was most precious to her. Lent calls us to examine our hearts—do we treasure Jesus above all? True discipleship means surrendering all for the One who surrendered Himself for us.

Prayer Focus: That lost people would come to see the surpassing worth of Christ.

Prayer Prompt: Father, open blind eyes to the beauty of Your Son. Let the fragrance of His sacrifice fill the earth and draw the lost to salvation. Strip away every lesser treasure that competes for my heart, that I may love Him with abandon, as Mary did. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Give something valuable—time, resources, or encouragement—to someone in need as an act of Christlike love.

TUESDAY, MARCH 31
– THE LAST SUPPER: A NEW COVENANT

Scripture Reading: Luke 22:14-23

Devotional Reflection:

The Passover lamb had always pointed forward to this moment, when the true Lamb of God would take away the sins of the world. In this meal, Jesus redefines everything. His body, broken; His blood, poured out—this is the cost of our redemption. Yet in the midst of this solemn moment, the disciples argue about greatness. How often do we, too, miss the weight of His sacrifice, distracted by our own concerns? Lent calls us to come to the table in awe, remembering that our salvation was purchased at infinite cost.

Prayer Focus: That those who are far from God would recognize the cost of Christ's sacrifice and turn to Him.

Prayer: O Lamb of God, what love is this—that You would take my place, that You would bear my sin? Let the reality of Your broken body and shed blood shake me awake. And let those who do not yet know You come to the table, hungry for the grace only You can give. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Reflect on Christ's sacrifice. Give thanks to God and tell someone about how He loves us even though we are undeserving.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1
– THE AGONY IN GETHSEMANE

Scripture Reading: Matthew 26:36-46

Devotional Reflection:

In the garden, beneath the weight of what is to come, Jesus falls to the ground. The One who commanded storms to be still now trembles in sorrow, His soul crushed with grief. “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” Yet even here, His love does not waver: “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” This moment reveals the unfathomable depths of Christ’s obedience. He does not endure the cross out of mere duty but out of a love so vast that He will drink the cup of God’s wrath for us. The call of Lent is not only to recognize His suffering but to join Him in surrender—to lay down our wills before the Father and trust that His way, though costly, leads to life.

Prayer Focus: That those resisting Christ’s call would surrender their hearts fully to Him.

Prayer Prompt: Father, let not my will but Yours be done. Break every stubborn resistance in me, and in those who are still far from You. Let them see the love that sweated drops of blood and bowed before Your perfect will. O Lord, lead them to surrender. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Spend intentional time in prayer, surrendering an area of your life where you have struggled to trust God. Pray for you family and loved ones who are lost.

THURSDAY, APRIL 2
– THE TRIAL AND DENIAL

Scripture Reading: Luke 22:54-62

Devotional Reflection:

Peter, the bold disciple who had sworn unwavering allegiance, now stands in the cold, denying his Lord. “I do not know Him,” he says—not once, but three times. The rooster crows. Jesus turns and looks at him. And Peter weeps bitterly. How many times have we, in our own ways, denied Christ? Through silence when we should speak, through fear when we should stand firm, through comfort when we should sacrifice. Yet Peter’s story does not end in despair. The gaze of Jesus is not condemnation, but love—a love that will restore, redeem, and send him out to feed His sheep.

Prayer Focus: That those who have turned away from Christ would experience His restoring love.

Prayer Prompt: Lord, I am like Peter. I have denied You in my fear, in my self-interest, in my weakness. Yet You do not cast me away. Look upon me with mercy. And look upon those who have wandered far—call them back, restore them, and send them out for Your glory. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Reach out to someone who has drifted from the faith. Encourage them with the truth that Jesus restores.

FRIDAY, APRIL 3
– THE CRUCIFIXION: IT IS FINISHED

Scripture Reading: John 19:16-30

Devotional Reflection:

The nails pierce flesh. The sky darkens. The Son of God, the innocent One, hangs between heaven and earth, bearing the full weight of sin. “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?” He is abandoned so that we might be brought near. And then, with one final breath, He declares, “It is finished.” These words are not defeat but victory. The debt is paid. The curse is lifted. The veil is torn. The road to the Father stands open. This is the heart of the gospel: Christ crucified, for us. Lent calls us to stand at the foot of the cross, to behold the cost of our redemption, and to live in the freedom He has won.

Prayer Focus: That the lost would behold the cross and believe.

Prayer Prompt: O Christ, my Savior, how can it be? That You, the spotless Lamb, would bear my sin? Let the cross be my only hope, my only boast, my only song. And let those still blind to its wonder be awakened—let them see, let them believe, let them live. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Share the story of Christ’s sacrifice with someone who needs to hear it.

SATURDAY, APRIL 4
– THE SILENCE OF THE TOMB

Scripture Reading: Matthew 27:57-66

Devotional Reflection:

The body of Jesus is laid in a borrowed tomb. The stone is rolled into place. The world is hushed in grief. For His followers, all hope seems lost. But even in the silence, God is at work. Lent reminds us that waiting is part of the story. There are moments in our faith journey when all seems dark, when prayers seem unanswered, when God seems absent. Yet the promise of Easter is this: the silence of Saturday is not the end.

Prayer Focus: That those who feel lost in darkness would hold fast to the hope of resurrection.

Prayer Prompt: O Lord of hope, meet those who sit in the silence of despair. Speak into their waiting, their grief, their uncertainty. Let them know that Sunday is coming, that the grave is not the end, that Christ will rise. Amen.

Spiritual Challenge: Sit in silence today and reflect on the hope of resurrection.

You have made it to the end of week 7. Take time to reflect, maybe even write down, what you have learn during these 40 days. Give thanks to God for sustaining you and for teaching you. Join your church family tomorrow to celebrate the resurrection of Christ like never before.

CONCLUSION: Walking Forward in Grace

Over the past seven weeks, we have journeyed together through the season of Lent, tracing the path of Christ from His baptism and ministry, through His teachings on repentance and discipleship, into His suffering and death, and finally to the hope of resurrection.

- **In Week 1**, we heard Jesus' invitation to repentance and discipleship, challenging us to lay down our own desires and follow Him.
- **In Week 2**, we entered into the intimacy of prayer, learning from Jesus how to seek the Father's face and abide in His presence.
- **In Week 3**, we walked in Jesus' compassion and suffering, seeing His heart for the broken and the cost of true love.
- **In Week 4**, we beheld the humility and lordship of Christ, the King who entered Jerusalem on a donkey and who calls us to a kingdom not of this world.
- **In Week 5**, we sat at the foot of the cross, contemplating the weight of Christ's sacrifice and the depths of His redeeming love.
- **And in Week 6**, we reached the glorious triumph of Easter—the empty tomb, the risen Lord, and the promise of new life.

Each step of this journey has been a call to deeper **self-examination, prayer, repentance, and devotion**. Each day, we have fasted in some way—not simply to deny ourselves, but to **remind our hearts of our**

utter dependence on God. Each Scripture passage has pointed us toward **Christ's call to live in light of His kingdom.**

But now, Lent is over. Easter has come. What now?

A Life of Devotion Beyond Lent

Lent was never meant to be an isolated spiritual exercise—a temporary commitment to self-discipline before returning to “normal life.” Rather, it was meant to **form us into people who hunger and thirst for righteousness** (Matthew 5:6), people who live in the reality of Christ's death and resurrection every single day.

So as you move forward, let us encourage you to **continue in the habits you have cultivated** over these 40 days:

- **Continue in daily Scripture reading and prayer.** This guide has given you a model of structured, intentional devotion—let it serve as a foundation for a lifelong rhythm of drawing near to God.
- **Continue in fasting.** Fasting is not just for Lent. Whether it's a regular discipline (such as fasting one day a week) or occasional times of seeking God more deeply, let it be a tool that sharpens your dependence on Christ.
- **Continue in repentance and self-examination.** The call to take up your cross and follow Jesus is a daily one. Keep asking: Where is Christ calling me to surrender? Where is He calling me to grow?
- **Continue in compassion and service.** Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve—and He calls us to do the same. Let the humility

and love of Christ shape the way you love your family, your church, your community, and even your enemies.

- **Continue to fix your eyes on eternity.** Lent ends with Easter, but Easter itself is just a glimpse of the greater resurrection that is yet to come. Let the hope of the gospel shape every day of your life, as you wait eagerly for the day when Christ returns in glory.

As we close this journey, my prayer is that these 40 days have deepened your hunger for God, your love for His Word, and your longing to walk in step with the Spirit. May the habits you have formed not fade, but flourish. And may the joy of Easter—Christ’s victory over sin and death—fill you with strength for the road ahead.

Keep seeking. Keep praying. Keep surrendering.

For Christ has risen, and in Him, we rise too.

*The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.*

Amen.

(Numbers 6:24-26)
