

# LOWLY & HUMBLE

A L E N T D E V O T I O N A L



# What is Lent?

The word 'Lent' comes from Latin for '40 days'; it is traditionally viewed as the 40 days leading up to the celebration of Easter. It also stems from the same word as 'lengthen.' It is an opportunity to be intentional in slowing down for 40 days and getting our hearts ready for the full meaning of Easter.

Traditionally, Lent has been a time for fasting. A fast is giving something up intentionally in order to make more space for connection with God. It's a reminder that God supplies our needs and we find our satisfaction in Him. Many people choose to fast from food — maybe a certain meal each week, or a certain kind of food. Others find it more meaningful to fast from social media, or a kind of entertainment (radio in the car, Netflix, etc.).

In modern times, the Church has thought about the 40 days in 2 ways: fasting, or *subtracting* something from your life, and also *adding* something to your life, all with the goal of becoming closer in your relationship with God. For this Lent season, what would it look like to subtract something in your life that disconnects you from God, and to add something that draws you closer to God? This devotional is designed with that in mind, to help you focus on the story of Jesus and his invitation to us today.

## **Reflective questions to ponder over the next 40 days:**

*What takes space in your life that you could intentionally let go of for 40 days in order to make more room for God?*

*What about something you could add? What could that look like for you personally, or for your family?*

*Where do you need God to help you rest?*

*Where do you need God's encouragement to begin something?*

# Isn't Lent for Catholics?

It's true that Lent has been a tradition in the Catholic church globally, as well as other Orthodox traditions (Greek, Easter, Ethiopian, etc.). Many historians believe this practice started in imitation of Jesus. We see Jesus' example of setting aside 40 days of prayer and fasting in the desert as a way to connect with God and prepare for His ministry. (*Matthew 4:1-11*)

In recent decades, more of the global Protestant denominations have started introducing Lent as a way to deepen the way Christians all over the world can connect with God and prepare for Easter in meaningful ways.

## **Reflective Questions:**

*Did you grow up in a church that practiced Lent? What do you remember about that?*

*Is this a brand new idea for you? What are your initial feelings about Lent?*

## ***How are we practicing Lent as a church?***

As a community, we are taking these 40 days to read the same scriptures and devotionals together, and choosing to add one practice to our lives, and also to subtract something for 40 days. Fill out the Plus One and Minus One sections below. We'd love for you to share your ideas with us!

**Plus One:** What spiritual practice is God inviting you to try on this Lent in order to spend more time with him?

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**Minus One:** What is God inviting you personally to set aside for this 40 day period in order to make more room for Him?

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## ***Getting Started***

This booklet will walk you through the six weeks of Lent with scriptures, reflections, questions, artwork, and space for you to journal if you wish. We have intentionally created this devotional to help you process and walk through Jesus' story, beginning with his triumphal entry to Jerusalem, through the Last Supper and his betrayal, then the crucifixion and resurrection. Each devotional entry will look at Jesus' story through the lens of his humility. As you read, journal, and engage with the discussion questions, we would encourage you to invite your family and friends to join you on this journey. Invite others to pray for you, that God would highlight specific parts of this story for you.

Alongside the weekly devotionals, we've included some worship songs to add to your music playlists. The songs are centered around each weekly theme, and will build up your own personal liturgy and worship.

Please engage with any and all of these resources that you find helpful! None of this is meant to overwhelm or consume all of your time, but it is certainly a challenge to add spiritual practices over the next six weeks

We are praying for you as you begin this journey of reconciliation. Let us know how we can best pray for you and join you on your journey. Email us at [prayer@headwatersvineyard.org](mailto:prayer@headwatersvineyard.org) with any prayer requests, and we'll follow up with you.

## **Week 1:**

# **Expectations of a King**

### **Scripture Reading:**

**Hebrews 1:2** ...but in these last days he[God] has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.

**Isaiah 9:6** For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

**Matthew 21:1-5, Luke 19:35-40, Isaiah 9:6-7, Hebrews 1:1-4**

### **Devotional:**

Question to ponder...Are there moments where you find yourself in a place of anxiety, complacency, or weariness due to unmet expectations? I'm sure the Pharisees, the religious rulers of Jesus' time, would understand all too well how that feels.

In Matthew, we see that the crowds are in awe of the stories and scriptures that were foretold just as the prophet Zechariah wrote (*Zech 9:9*) about the king of Israel riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. This triumphal entry was highly anticipated by Israel for generations, and they were all expectant of something or someone that would change the world. And it did! Just not in the way anyone thought it would. The crowd shouting out praises saying Hosanna to the son of David was the recognition of Jesus prophesied about throughout scripture (*2 Sam. 7:16, Psalm 118*). Jesus was truly the coming King!

This same scene presented in Luke paints a different picture of the same day. It lays out the conflict between Jesus and the leaders of Israel in full view. In particular, the Pharisees found themselves doubting that this 'messiah' was *the* Messiah prophesied about, largely because Jesus' actions on this particular day was an act of disruption to their perceived natural order. In a show of holy frustration, Jesus enters the outer courts of the temple, disrupting those who were there performing acts not meant for the temple of God (*Luke 45*).

These same Pharisees were expecting a performative, warrior messiah who was boisterous and would take over by force to rescue all of His children of Israel. But instead, they encountered a Messiah that was in direct opposition to what was before. Jesus came humbly, with a gentle, loving correction, to redeem and lead to what could and eventually would be: His Kingdom *breaking in*. The Kingdom of God, breaking into our reality.

Jesus shook the foundations of all that was foretold about the King of Israel. The Pharisees had expectations, and when those expectations did not line up with what they were taught to believe, they did not know how to respond or react. I imagine the Pharisees asking the question, "Could this Jesus really be King?"

Expectations are tricky. Expectations can help set a healthy standard of who we want to be and how we desire to be in relationship with others and with God. On the other hand, when we allow insecurity, fear, or complacency to skew our expectations, we fail to see God's overarching Kingdom plan. Our worldly concerns drown out the healthy expectations of a loving God encountering us in our broken world. In the same way, because of the Pharisees' own fear and pride, they were unable comprehend how the Messiah could look and act like this humble Jesus.

Wouldn't it be something if we started first by seeking God and being reminded of His Kingdom plan. We can only assume how drastically our expectations of ourselves and relationships would change our own lives, and the lives of those around us for the better.

Jesus walked with healthy expectations...the confidence of knowing who His Father is and therefore, who He was (and is!).

Jesus also knew the Father's plan for him. What would our lives look like if we allowed him access to all of us and allowed him to show us the plan He has for our lives as well? How might our expectations inform our current problems? If only we would let this humble King fulfill our expectations, we would experience the transforming power of the kingdom of God!

### **Discussion Questions:**

- 1. Where have you allowed yourself to become so enveloped in your plans or pride that you lost sight of God's plan?*
- 2. Where have your expectations taken an unhealthy turn? (impacted by fear, pride, loss, etc.)*
- 3. Are we setting Kingdom expectations for ourselves and in our relationships with others or are we allowing our human intentions set the standards or narratives in our lives?*
- 4. For Families: What are some healthy kingdom expectations for your family? What are unhealthy expectations?*

### **Songs:**

King of Heaven (Live) - Vineyard Worship; Holy Forever (Live) [ft. CeCe Winans] - Bethel Music & Jenn Johnson

### **POETIC REFLECTION:**

*Oh what a King  
That would lift up the meek  
The poor in spirit  
The mourning  
And more  
Who invites the uninvited  
To dine as daughters and sons*



## **Week 2:**

# **Tenants in His Kingdom**

### **Scripture Reading:**

**Psalm 118:22** The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;

**Mark 12:6** “He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’”

**Mark 11:9-10, 12:1-12, Psalm 118:19-29**

### **Devotional:**

About 15 years ago, we leased our rental home to a very nice family who became angry when we decided to sell it. They made it difficult for us to access the property during the sale process. Even though it was our house, our tenants dictated when we could enter. It reminds me of the story in Mark 12 when Jesus tells the Parable of the Tenants, a story that illustrates God’s contentious relationship with Israel.

In this parable, a wealthy landowner (God) has cultivated a beautiful vineyard (His Kingdom) that he leases to tenants (Israel’s religious leaders) to operate for a portion of the profit. At harvest time, the landowner sends his servants (prophets God has sent throughout history) to collect his share of the fruit. The tenants kill the servants instead. So, the landowner sends more servants and the tenants kill them as well. Finally, the landowner sends his beloved son (Jesus) to collect his share and the tenants kill him, too, seeing an opportunity to seize the inheritance.

At this point in the story, Jesus pauses to ask the listeners what they think the landowner will do next. He continues by telling them the landowner returns, kills all of the tenants, and leases the vineyard to a whole new group of tenants instead (gentiles and non-Jews) who will give him his share of the fruit at harvest time.

See, the religious leaders had forgotten their place and acted as if they owned the vineyard. They had rejected God's messengers and ultimately plotted to kill His Son. They failed to recognize Jesus as the Messiah who was the cornerstone of God's plan for salvation.

Jesus even quotes scripture to them, "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes." (*Psalm 118:22-23*) Jesus fulfills this prophecy! He was rejected by the Pharisees but becomes the foundation (the cornerstone) of God's kingdom. The cornerstone is the critical element that holds everything together.

What’s fascinating about this parable is how Jesus shows up humbly throughout it. Instead of directly accusing the religious leaders, he tells them a story like a teacher reading a book to children. It’s an indirect approach, inviting the Pharisees see their own faults. Jesus also speaks the truth in love. He challenges them but without anger or mockery. His purpose in sharing this parable wasn’t to shame or embarrass them but to offer them a chance for repentance. He desired their salvation, not condemnation. And finally, Jesus portrays himself in the story as the son sent by the landowner, knowing He would be rejected and killed.

It’s a story where He could have portrayed himself as powerful but chose to portray himself with humility in foretelling his own painful death. Yet another example of the upside Kingdom.

Where do we find ourselves in this story?

For us, this parable is a powerful reminder of our role as stewards and faithful tenants, not owners, of God's Kingdom. It isn't ours, and we owe the fruits of our labor to Him. We are called to faithfully tend to what God has entrusted to us and to recognize Jesus as the cornerstone of our faith. And it also challenges us to question how we respond to God's authority. Not like tenants who try to assert our own control but as stewards submitting to God's will. When we build our lives on the firm foundation of Christ's teachings, sacrifice, and authority, we are equipped to love and honor Him in all that we do.

**Discussion Questions:**

- 1. Are there any areas in your life where you are acting like an owner rather than a steward? What small change can you make to shift that around?*
- 2. Sometimes we are blinded by legalistic views or religious beliefs that don't come from Jesus' teachings. Is there a belief you need to pray about this week to ensure it aligns with a life of freedom under Jesus?*
- 3. When we think we are right, we may use a sharp tongue or harsh words to make our point. Is there an area of your life where you need to adopt the humility of Jesus when sharing your opinion or views?*
- 4. For Families: In what ways can you better honor Jesus as the cornerstone of your faith and life? What is one change you can make this week that would be honoring to Him?*

**Songs:**

Cornerstone - Hillsong Worship; Build My Life - Pat Barrett

**POETIC REFLECTION:**

*What if I was a worker in that field  
Selfish  
Angry  
Jealous  
Lost in my own thoughts  
Would You find a way  
To forgive even me?*





## Week 3:

# Something That Lasts

### Scripture Reading:

**Psalm 23:5** You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

**Matthew 26:2** “As you know, the Passover is two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”

**John 12:1-8, Matthew 26:1-13, Psalm 23:5-6**

### Devotional:

One of the hardest parts of existing in the 21st Century is that we know *too* much. We don't just know about the new housing division being proposed down the road, or the worker's strike at the local grocery store, we know about famines across the world, and deportations across the country, and it all feels like *too* much because what are we possibly supposed to do? How can anything we contribute, anything we try, matter in the face of [waves hands at the world] all of that!

Should we give money, volunteer our time, post something on Instagram to show we're an ally, contact our representative, give money to the local homeless shelter? The world is *too much*, and we are not enough.

Something about the disciples' response to the woman who washes Jesus' feet made me think of this — how Mary, perhaps overwhelmed by Jesus recently bringing her brother back to life, uses an extravagantly nice bottle of perfume to anoint Jesus, and immediately is told “You're doing it wrong!!!” by the disciples.

They tell Mary she should have used it to help poor people, and all I can think about are the million different things in our world I'm supposed to be caring about. And yet Jesus says (*my paraphrase!*) “Hey guess what, she did this for me, and wherever the story of who I am goes, what Mary did here will be remembered.” And now 2000 years later ... here we are, talking about it.

Isn't this what we want? It's not just that we want to do the “right thing” with our time/money/energy, it's that we want to be part of something that lasts. We want to participate in God's kingdom. We want to make a difference. So how do we do that? It seems like, in this case, Mary was so focused on Jesus, so caught up in who he is, so committed to following him, so overflowing with gratitude, that she stepped right in line with what God was doing.

In the middle of a world that really is *too* much, we're invited to remember that we aren't the one who brings dead things to life. We're not the Word through whom everything lives, and moves, and finds its being. Jesus is. And what our Shepherd King invites us into, first, is to come receive from him. To be led to green pastures and still waters. To be anointed with his goodness first. And then, as we're focused on him, as our life centers around him, we move to action and find that because we were so focused on Jesus, our actions happened to step right in line with where God's kingdom is at work.

And so we focus on Jesus. We pray. We read. We practice habits and disciplines and fasting and all the other things as a way of becoming obsessed with, passionate about, committed to Jesus. And THEN we turn to the world, and we act in simple obedience, believing that God will use what we're doing

to build his kingdom.

And the best news out of all of this is that his kingdom *LASTS*.

**Discussion Questions:**

- 1. Where do you find yourself overwhelmed by the world? Where do things feel particularly anxious or hopeless? As you sit with that feeling, turn back to Psalm 23. What might God be saying to you right now?*
- 2. Mary was almost certainly responding to seeing her brother brought back to life - how could she not be extravagantly grateful?! Where have you seen God at work in your life lately? Reflect back on the past week, year, TEN years. Where has God been faithful?*
- 3. You might not have a crazy expensive perfume, but God has given us resources (time, money, passion for a cause). It might be worth asking God how he feels about what's happening in the world, and how he might be inviting you to participate in that.*
- 4. For Families: Mary gave away something that mattered to her (very expensive perfume) out of gratitude for everything Jesus had done! Part of Lent is giving up things that are important to us, to focus on Jesus. If you have been doing that, how is it going? If you haven't, what's something you could give up for the rest of Lent as a way of, as one pastor I know put it, "creating a longing, and then satisfying that longing with Jesus."*

**Songs:**

All Things Rise - Vineyard Worship; Nothing Else - Cody Carnes

**POETIC REFLECTION:**

*As You washed their feet  
Did they remember  
The scent of that fine perfume  
Given extravagantly  
Thankfully received  
In Your towel  
On Your knees  
Was it a reminder  
Of the most costly grace*



## Week 4:

# The Last Supper

### Scripture Reading:

**Psalm 51:11** Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

**Luke 22:20** 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.

**Luke 22:14-23, John 13:1-20, Matthew 20:28, Psalm 51**

### Devotional:

28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (*Matthew 20:28*)

If you knew tonight would be your very last meal, what would you want to eat? Who would you want sitting beside you, sharing in those final moments? These questions invite us into the heart of what is commonly called The Last Supper.

In the days of Jesus, evening meals were more than just a time to satisfy hunger. They were slow, unhurried gatherings where families and friends connected deeply. Without television, internet, or endless distractions, these meals were sacred spaces for storytelling, laughter, and sharing life together.

But this particular meal—The Last Supper—was even more significant. It was the Passover meal, a time when the Jewish people remembered God’s deliverance from slavery in Egypt. Yet, on this night, Jesus was beginning something new. He was inaugurating a greater Passover—one that offered freedom from the slavery of sin, not just for a single nation, but for all people, for all time. He asked His disciples, including you and me, to remember this ultimate act of love: His death on the cross and His resurrection—the final Passover that would change everything.

In this Lent season, consider the state of your soul. Are you weary? Are you burdened by anxiety, depression, or anger? Are you numbing yourself with endless scrolling, binge-watching, or other distractions? Have you lost touch with the simple, beautiful rhythms of life?

Perhaps the Last Supper is an invitation to reset. To slow down. To return to what truly matters. To sit with Jesus and let Him restore your soul. The psalmist David captures this longing: “Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.” (*Psalm 51:12*)

Community is an essential part of our faith journey. We are not meant to walk this path alone. Jesus chose to share His final meal with His disciples—His closest friends—because He knew the strength that comes from gathering together. In times of joy and in times of suffering, community anchors us, reminding us that we are loved, supported, and not alone. When we break bread together, we remember not only Christ’s sacrifice but also our call to be His body—united and caring for one another. In a world that often isolates us, the table becomes a place of belonging. It is here that we practice forgiveness, grace, and love.

I know that as I reflect about the most important moments in my life, they were never about achievements or accomplishments. They were always about people. They always included others. As I reflect on The Last Supper, I am struck by the reality that Jesus chose to spend His last moments on this earth with His closest friends, and it wasn’t just the twelve disciples.

What is God inviting you into as you reflect on this sacred meal? Maybe He is calling you to unplug, to gather with loved ones, or simply to sit in His presence. Who would be at your table? What would you eat? What would you talk about? Whatever it is, may you find renewal in remembering the Last Supper—the meal that changed everything.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. *What would you eat at your last meal? Who would you want to be present?*
2. *What things would you talk about? What would you remember together?*
3. *What is the Holy Spirit asking you to let go of in this reflection?*
4. *For Families: What is the Holy Spirit inviting you to engage with together?*

**Songs:**

Invitacion Fountain - Vineyard Worship; Communion - Maverick City Music

**POETIC REFLECTION:**

*Roll call!  
Is everyone here?  
Prepare the feast!  
The finest of wines,  
Poured out for many  
The most unleavened of breads  
Given for you  
Take  
Eat  
As we celebrate new life*



# **Week 5:**

## **Alone, But Not Hidden**

### **Scripture Reading:**

**Mathew 27:32** Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

**Psalms 22:1** My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish?

**Matthew 26:36-46, Psalm 22:1-8, Mark 14:50, John 17:20-26**

### **Devotional:**

In the presence of his friends, Jesus asked three of them to join him and pray... pray as the cup became too heavy to hold. He invited them to be near, to keep watch, to hold up. What did the face of impending death look like to him? With heavy heart, he fell face down and cried. “Does it have to be this way?” But even still, he remained resolute – “Not my will, but yours be done.”

I’ve read this story countless times. I imagine Peter, James, and John, in the wee hours of the morning, loyally following Jesus, ready to serve and defend him, and still succumbing to the body’s natural need for sleep. I wonder how long they lasted until their eyes closed. “I’ll just rest them for a minute,” they tell themselves while drifting towards sleep.

When our best intentions to be a loyal friend, a trusted companion, a faithful student fall short, what do we do with what remains? I like to think the fellas were each holding down their own side of the fort, praying and asking for the strength to be with Jesus in this hour, not certain of what was to come, but very much aware of the weight their beloved teacher and friend was carrying. I think of the prayers I offer in the wee hours of the night, for my kids, my husband, my friends, my ministry, and I find sleep meets me sooner than I say Amen. Does God listen any less because I fall asleep mid-prayer?

No, He does not. I picture Him sitting with me in my bed, the way I often do with my own kids as they share stories of their days with me at the days-end. I picture Jesus meeting his friends the same way, embracing them as they worriedly ask “what does all of this mean? What is about to happen?” And while I have no real knowledge of what was going through their minds at this time, I picture myself with my own friends, in times of grief or turmoil, in times when it feels like all I can do is be near and offer this power of presence.

When I was a kid, I had a propensity for procrastination (and I still do as an adult). My mom, who worked the graveyard shift most of most of my childhood, would see my light still on and enter my room in the wee hours of the morning, while I was feverishly typing at our old typewriter. She’d ask how it was going and I’d often respond with a soft grunt or a whimper, and in that brief exchange, my mom knew I really just wanted her to be with me. I knew she couldn’t write the essay for me, or she couldn’t complete the physics homework, but the power of her presence in those moments served as the companionship I needed to complete whatever I needed to turn in in the morning.

I think of Jesus in the garden, facing the grave, knowing there was no turning back, and still asking his friends to join him, to be present, while he goes before his Father and says “... if it is possible, may this cup to be taken away from me, but not my will, but your will be done.”



The season of Lent allows us to sit in the presence of Jesus, and ponder the magnitude of his sacrifice. And while we know that he overcame death, we cannot forget that Jesus himself looked at the unfolding events with a feeling of overwhelm, and he invited friends to be with him. During this season and moving forward, remember that we have each been invited to draw near to our Father. And he designed us to be creatures of community. Crying out to God in the presence of our friends, and holding our friends and loved ones before him allows others into those places of vulnerability, and it's in those moments when we are truly seen – seen by others, and more importantly, seen by our Father who loves us.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. *What resistance do you feel, if any, about asking for prayer?*
2. *In times when you've reached out to others for prayer, what ways did God show up for you when you invited someone to partner with you in prayer?*
3. *How do you speak to God when you pray? Are you candid, like speaking to a friend, or do you weigh your words?*
4. *For Families: Who can we ask to pray for us and commit to praying for them?*

**Songs:**

As I Pray - Johnny Q. Public; Friends - KB & Ty Brasel

**POETIC REFLECTION:**

*A loneliness unknown  
The Creator  
Left by His creation  
Unheralded for eternity  
To be never known again  
Yet in this moment, still  
By name  
We were on His lips*



## Week 6:

# The Best of Friends...The Worst of Friends

### Scripture Reading:

**Mark 14:43** Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.

**Psalm 41:9** Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me.

**Mark 14:10-11, 43-49, Psalm 41:9, Luke 22:54-62**

### Devotional:

Have you ever experienced betrayal at the hands of someone you love? Who are we kidding? Of course you have! Anyone who has been in any measure of relationship with another human has experienced some measure of pain, betrayal, and denial from those dearest to them. Jesus experienced the ultimate betrayal at the hand of one of his closest relationships – his disciple Judas Iscariot. This disciple who first-hand witnessed the miracles of Jesus, participated in spreading the good news across the middle eastern country side, a friend who journeyed alongside the other eleven disciples, one trained and taught extensively by Jesus for three years. This friend agreed to betray Jesus to the chief priests. At some point, Judas' heart towards Jesus, His ministry, and His friendship changed.

We don't have a clear understanding of the motivation for his betrayal, yet Judas became the instrument that ensured Jesus was handed over, arrested as a threat to the Roman government. Judas became the front runner of a gang of hoodlums - "a crowd armed with swords and clubs" (*Mark 14:43*) – kissing Jesus' cheek in greeting to identify him as the one to be arrested. Can you relate to someone you dearly loved "kissing your cheek" immediately before an act of great pain and brokenness in your relationship?

Before we get stuck in our own betrayals and places of pain, let's focus on how Jesus engaged his...

The night before Judas' traitorous act, we see that Jesus reveals He knows exactly what is coming: "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me – one who is eating with me." (*Mark 14:18b*). In fact, in the book of Matthew (*26:23-26*), we see Jesus speak directly to Judas and affirm that he knows Judas is the one who will betray his Rabbi. Now, if you or I had this type of information before a betrayal occurred, we might be tempted to protest viciously, call out someone's behavior, gather our own angry mob to stand up to a friends' impending action. However, Jesus' immediate response – his very next act after revealing foreknowledge of Judas' betrayal – is to give thanks to God, address his disciples by offering the broken bread on the table as His body, the wine as His blood shed for the forgiveness of their sins. **WHAT?!?!?**

Fast forward to Jesus' excruciating experience at his crucifixion on the cross, and we see a similar response to Jesus' abusers:

*33* 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. *34* Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (*Luke 23:33-34*)

For these soldiers, Jesus came to die. For the onlookers, Jesus came to die. For the thieves on the

cross, Jesus came to die. For you, Jesus came to die. For your neighbor, Jesus came to die. For the betrayer at your table, Jesus came to die. For the abuser, Jesus came to die. For the wayward family member, Jesus came to die. For the political activist you hate, Jesus came to die. For the one who feels irreconcilable to you, Jesus came to die. For your enemy, Jesus came to die. For your children, Jesus came to die. Forgive us Lord, we know not what we do...

**Discussion Questions:**

1. *What do you experience emotionally as you imagine an almighty King laying down his might, strength, and power to be mistreated? Jesus was a bridge to redemption back to the Father as atonement, but that behavior is foreign to us... Sit with these honest feelings in prayer.*
2. *What is God revealing to you about His nature in His responses to betrayal? How does this contrast with our worldly lust for revenge and justice?*
3. *What invitation might Jesus be extending to you right now?*
4. *For Families: Are there family relationships, or friendships, with experiences that you need to forgive like Jesus did on the cross? Take a moment together with our loved ones to speak the words of Jesus over every hurt: "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing." Pray that you would learn to emulate His example in your daily life...*

**Songs:**

All Hail King Jesus - Jeremy Riddle; Breathe In, Sing Out - Vineyard Worship & Kyle Howard

**POETIC REFLECTION:**

*It seems a lifetime ago  
We were friends, once  
And even still  
Compassion leads me  
Do what you came for, friend  
I receive your silver tainted kiss*



# **Good Friday:**

## **The Weight of Death**

### **Scripture Reading:**

**Matthew 27:22** “What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” Pilate asked. They all answered, “Crucify him!”

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

**Matthew 27:15-22, Luke 23:26-49, Isaiah 53, Hebrews 9:28,**

### **Devotional:**

Thanks to movies, TV shows, posters, art...it's pretty easy to visualize Jesus on the cross. Our savior, God incarnate, the Creator embodied in his creation...hung on a cross and left to die. Where it gets challenging is imagining the divine, breathing out his last breath over the very people he breathed life into.

What kind of backward, upside down scenario is this?!

Imagine being one of his followers. Imagine you were there, bought in, believing that he truly was the Messiah, the one to save us. And then he's gone. He raised his friend Lazarus...why couldn't he save himself? What would go through your mind?

Two thousand years later, we have the gift of hindsight. We get to see the full story. We know that in a short while, Jesus WILL rise, he WILL be alive again. But the reality of this story that we move on too quickly from, is that Jesus WAS dead. Gone. His human body ceased to function. He had been beaten, tortured, eventually murdered by the people he came to minister to. The frailty of his flesh made evident.

How was this the victory promised about the coming Messiah? How does this win?

5 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. (*Is. 53:5*)

Our victory comes from his death. In the blessed backwardness of God's kingdom, Jesus' death paid our price. Paul tells us “*13* But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” (*Eph. 2:13*) We who were separated from God through the division of sin were brought near through Jesus' death. The price was paid. And it was not through our own doing. Jesus chose to selflessly lay down his own life, his body for us.

In our modern world, with everything we could ever need just a trip to Big Box Store away, it's easy for us to get trapped in the value of things. We need food, shelter, water, the basic necessities...and Netflix, and phones, and movies, and Little Debbie's Christmas Tree Cakes...And as we watch those fluctuate in price, or new versions come out, or availability disappear, we lose a grip on value.

Even our lives get lost in what's truly valuable. We get caught up in what matters with our time, what job we have, how much money we have, what car we drive, or what school our kids go to. And none of those are inherently bad, it's about value, so what do we value?

So this Good Friday, the day we remember and honor Jesus' death, do you grasp its value? Jesus, on a sham trial, found guilty even though "in him all things hold together." (*Col. 1:17*)

Jesus, who "all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to..." (*Mt 28:18*) was stripped, beaten, flogged, whipped 39 times, mocked, and forced to then carry his own cross.

Jesus, who breathed life into Adam, creating him from dust, was crucified, nails driven through his wrists, crown of thorns placed on his head, hanging there until he breathed his last breath.

Jesus, "the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End" (*Rev. 21:6*), his lifeless body lowered down, and placed in a tomb.

This was not cheap. An unspeakable, unknowable, unbelievable price paid for you. For me. For us. Can you imagine, Jesus, Son of God, breathing his last. The weight of that breath lingering, holding space, filling the room. The weight of the Holy One, giving everything for us.

Priceless.

And in another beautifully unexpected, 'upside down Kingdom' turn of events...it's free.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. *What picture comes to mind as you think about Jesus' death?*
2. *As you think about the cost of Jesus' death, how does your life reflect the value he's placed on you? How can you respond to him?*
3. *Who in your life needs to know about this weighty, but free gift from Jesus?*
4. *For Families: How much does Jesus love each one of you? Can you put to words how wide and long and high and deep his love is?*

### **Songs:**

Sing His Name (Live) - Vineyard Worship & Alexandria Faison; Is He Worthy - Shane & Shane

### **POETIC REFLECTION:**

*Oh the horror  
The weight of my sin  
Present and on display  
Messiah, bearing my marks  
I can hardly look  
Yet I can't look away  
I must see the cost  
I must see how much I'm loved*





# Holy Saturday:

## Waiting

### Scripture Reading:

**Psalm 31:5** Into your hands I commit my spirit; deliver me, Lord, my faithful God.

**Luke 23:56** Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

**Luke 23:50-56, Psalm 31:1-5, 1 Corinthians 1:18-25**

### Devotional:

How do you feel when you have to wait?

There are times in life that waiting can bring profound joy. The anticipation and excitement around an announcement, a special vacation, a new baby, a visit from a loved one. I remember when my wife and I were dating long distance, the adrenaline and butterflies in my stomach when I would pick her up from the airport, checking the arrivals board, watching the escalator to catch a glimpse of her after not seeing her for a month or more. Pure joy.

There are other times where waiting can be painful. Waiting for medical test results, sitting in a “waiting room” while a loved one is in surgery with unknown outcomes, waiting for a job offer after a period of unemployment, waiting for clear direction in a looming transition. Waiting to be relieved from a commitment you’ve made that is sucking life from you.

When we wait on Holy Saturday our position in history requires us to be disciplined. Jesus’ disciples had to wrestle between faith (that he would return) and doubt (that they might be alone forever). Even in now knowing the full story, we must find ways to immerse ourselves in this day of waiting. Holy week is often a blur where we jump from Palm Sunday to Good Friday to Resurrection Sunday. We have become pretty good at “doing” Easter. Rinse and repeat. Waiting is hard...but in this instance if we fail to pause, wait, if we can’t immerse ourselves in it, if we don’t wait, *we miss it*.

Can you picture being with the Jesus, alongside him in ministry, watching him suffer a criminal’s death, seeing his battered, lifeless body hang from the cross?

His body being prepared and placed in the tomb?

The pain of being without your Rabbi, teacher, mentor, friend?

Questioning the last few years of your life?

All of this, it all has led to this point...

Can you picture waiting, hiding in a space, with your friends that have become your family, the other close disciples of Jesus? Waiting in a place of painful silence, vacillating between forced hope and honest, hopeless, fear.

Waiting...

Things probably started to connect in their waiting

Remember what He said about Jonah? “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

*(Matthew 12:40)* Is this what He was talking about? I wish when I didn't understand I would've said something...So many times I was nervous to ask and just kept quiet. *(Mark 9:32; Luke 9:45)*

Is this what He meant when He said that the "Son of Man must suffer many things"? *(Mark 8:31)* Finally understanding why Jesus defended Mary anointing His body with costly perfume. "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me." *(John 12:7-8)*

In the middle of Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday, there was a day where Jesus stayed dead...Take time to immerse yourself in this Holy Saturday. Submit yourself to the waiting, to the heartache. Allow Jesus to find you in that place, to wait with you, and to say to you, "Peace be with you." *(John 20:19)*

### **Discussion Questions:**

- 1. When do you remember a profound period of waiting? What were the circumstances? Who was involved? What were the emotions you felt?*
- 2. What can you do to immerse yourself in this experience to engage Holy Saturday? Can you imagine what it would have been like to be a disciple of Jesus, waiting after His crucifixion and death?*
- 3. How can you invite Jesus into times/seasons of waiting? How will that invitation change our perspective on and how you approach times that you have to wait?*
- 4. For Families: What is something you are waiting and/or hopeful for as a family? Where do you see Jesus when you are forced to be patient and "wait on the Lord"?*

### **Songs:**

I Will Wait for You There - Phil Wickham; I Surrender - Hillsong

### **POETIC REFLECTION:**

*Now?  
How about now?  
How long will He slumber  
In His carved out tomb?  
How long before we can celebrate  
The good news?  
In fact, the good-est news of all!*



# ***Easter Sunday:***

## ***Victory Through Humility***

### ***Scripture Reading:***

**1 Corinthians 15:54** When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

**Matthew 28, 1 Corinthians 15:50–58, Revelation 22:12–21**

### ***Devotional:***

I love a good story—one that stirs joy, pain, and love all at once. I think of *The Notebook*, where Noah and Allie’s love survives heartbreak, separation, and time. In the end, as they hold hands and take their final breaths together, we see the kind of love that has triumphed. Despite all the heartache, their love endured to the end.

In many ways, this mirrors the emotional journey of Jesus’ resurrection—a story of love, loss, heartbreak, and ultimately, redemption. The resurrection is the “turning of the page,” where the story shifts from sorrow to triumph, from despair to hope.

For Jesus’ disciples, there was no greater heartbreak than His death. He was their Teacher, King, and Savior. Then, on that dark Friday, everything seemed to end. Their hearts shattered. Their hope felt gone. But the plot twisted. Hope was never truly lost. When the women arrived at the tomb that first Easter morning, it was empty. The angel declared, “He is not here; He has risen, just as He said...” (*Matthew 28:6*)

Yet, Jesus didn’t rise in a grand spectacle. He didn’t flaunt His victory. Instead, He chose to meet His people in their brokenness. He appeared gently, humbly, full of grace. To Peter, who had denied Him three times, Jesus called from the shore, inviting him to breakfast, offering redemption, and healing the guilt that had weighed heavily on his heart. He met the doubting, the fearful, and the ashamed right where they were. He showed them His nail-scarred hands and invited them to touch Him. Imagine those moments: the risen Savior, extending grace to those who had failed and doubted, inviting them into His presence and offering peace, healing, and restoration. In those moments, He healed their shame, lifted their guilt, and filled them with new hope.

His victory wasn’t just a display of power—it was an invitation. Through His humility, He showed us that our failings do not define us; ***His love does.***

If you’ve never surrendered your life to Jesus, know this: He came for you. No matter what you’ve done or where you’ve been, His invitation is for you. As Romans 3:23 says, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” But God’s love is greater than all our mistakes. “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (*Romans 5:8*)

Death did not have the final say. Jesus rose, defeating sin and death once and for all. “Death has been swallowed up in victory...” (1 Corinthians 15:54-57). Through His resurrection, He extends an invitation to receive His grace and step into a new life. “If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” (*Romans 10:9*)

This Easter Sunday we celebrate Jesus’ resurrection, but it’s just the beginning. As the Church, we are part of an unfolding story. Jesus didn’t just rise to show that death had been conquered. He rose

to give us purpose. “Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations... And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (*Matthew 28:19-20*)

His resurrection is an invitation to join Him in His story—His mission to share love, grace, and peace with a world in need. We follow in the footsteps of our humble Savior, who, though He rose with all power and authority, still invited others with grace, forgiveness, love, and redemption.

Unlike every other story, we know how this one ends. Christ will return. “Behold, I am coming soon!” (*Revelation 22:12*) When Christ returns, He will make all things new. “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!’” (*Revelation 21:4-5*)

In our story, the credits don’t roll when we take our final breath. A new saga begins. For those who follow Jesus, the resurrection is a reminder that the best is yet to come...

### **Discussion Questions:**

- 1. Have you fully embraced the new life Jesus offers with humility, or are there areas in your heart where pride or self-reliance keep you distant from God? What steps can you take today to humbly accept His invitation and surrender those areas to Him?*
- 2. How can embracing humility help us fulfill the purpose Christ gave us in the Great Commission, especially when sharing His love and grace requires selflessness and service to others?*
- 3. Are there areas of guilt or shame that still weigh heavily on your heart, preventing you from fully walking in the freedom of Jesus’ resurrection? How does the forgiveness Jesus extended to Peter—who had failed Him deeply—show you that no sin is too great to be forgiven?*
- 4. For Families: How can you demonstrate Jesus’ love to those around you this week? What are some practical ways you can show humility and kindness to neighbors, classmates, and friends by putting their needs before your own?*

### **Songs:**

I Speak Jesus (feat. Lauren Hinds) [Live] - Vineyard Worship, Kyle Howard & Alexandria Faison; You’ve Already Won (Live) - Shane & Shane

### **POETIC REFLECTION:**

*All creation, wake up!  
Rise, for He rises before us!  
Death, where is your sting?  
Victory, once and for all  
No more price to be paid  
Sons  
Daughters  
Come and worship the Risen King!*



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