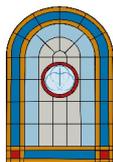


CREATING IDENTITY IN CHRIST
FROM
THE GOSPEL OF LUKE
LENTEN DEVOTION BOOK

FEBRUARY 16 - APRIL 5, 2026

51 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. - Luke 2:51-52



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CREATING IDENTITY IN CHRIST

DEVOTION BOOK
LENT 2026

A Journey to the Cross and the Empty Tomb

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Introduction

40 The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher. - Luke 6:40

23 Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.

- Luke 9:23-24

Welcome to the journey. A journey from brokenness and repentance to the cross and the empty tomb. The journey of Lent, 2026. A journey beginning with a moment of humility on Ash Wednesday and concluding with all the glory and power of the resurrection on Easter Sunday! Welcome to the journey!

Our devotional journey during Lent will be guided by the Gospel of Luke. Our preaching journey will be guided by seven signs found in the Gospel of John which revealed His glory and increased belief in Him. Both the devotional and preaching journey will be around the theme *"Identity in Christ."* While reading Luke, we will encounter many favorite verses and stories which shape our identity. When learning from the signs of Jesus, we will engage the identity of Christ with our identity. Both will help us continually be transformed into the likeness of Christ. We should truly desire that our identity is shaped by Jesus and Him alone.

The daily reading and devotions included in this devotion book are designed to help guide us. The reading will be less than a chapter a day most days, some days only a few verses and a few days an entire chapter. The divisions are around unity of thought.

Each day there is a prayer focus. It will be the same each day. As you pray, seek the wisdom of God to apply the daily reading to your life and how it can shape your identity to reflect Jesus Christ and allow you to experience the favor of God.

As I welcome you to this Lenten journey, I want to invite you to seriously consider fasting as part of the journey. Historically, there is an emphasis on fasting during Lent, with some degree of seriousness, but I want you to make it a daily part of your experience. I believe you will see a difference in your life. There is a Guide to Prayer and Fasting in the back of the book. It is explanatory and practical in nature. Join me as we pray and fast throughout this time together.

The devotion book concludes with a page to record significant thoughts, insights, or notes related to God speaking to you during Lent. Those are your thoughts and yours alone. Be honest. Let them become a part of your prayer time and a pathway to growth.

I will write the devotion each day from that day's reading in Luke. They are emailed to many people each day and posted on Facebook. Email me if you don't receive the devotion each day via email and would like to. I am looking forward to this special journey together.


ALAN BEASLEY
PASTOR

On a journey to the cross and empty tomb together,

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Monday - February 16, 2026

Preparation for Lent

Today's Scripture Reading - Isaiah 53

Prayer - Pray for a spirit of humility as you journey through Lent.

Isaiah 53 is an iconic chapter in the Old Testament prophesying the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. I invite you to read the entire chapter and reflect on it in preparation for Ash Wednesday.

Scripture

1 Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? 2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. 3 He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

4 Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. 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. 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. 9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. 11 After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. - Isaiah 53:1-12

Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we read the details of crucifixion and picture the results in our minds, give us a spirit of humility. As we read the reasons for the brutality, give us spirit of godly sorrow. May the brokenness of Jesus be somehow reflected in the brokenness of our hearts during this Lenten season. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Tuesday - February 17, 2026

Preparation for Lent

Today's Scripture Reading - Hosea 6

Prayer - Pray for anticipation of the resurrection will stir in your heart.

Hosea 6 describes the sin of the nations. The first three verses give the people hope of redemption and restoration. Meditate on these verses today.

Scripture

1 "Come, let us return to the Lord.

He has torn us to pieces

but he will heal us;

he has injured us

but he will bind up our wounds.

2 After two days he will revive us;

on the third day he will restore us,

that we may live in his presence.

3 Let us acknowledge the Lord;

let us press on to acknowledge him.

As surely as the sun rises,

he will appear;

he will come to us like the winter rains,

like the spring rains that water the earth." Hosea 6:1-3

Prayer

Heavenly Father, create in us a clean heart and restore to us the joy of your salvation through Jesus Christ. As we humble ourselves to journey through Lent, may the joy of the resurrection be the hope we hold onto. Lead us through the journey with humility and understanding the hopeful redemption to come. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 1 - Wednesday, February 18, 2026,

Ash Wednesday

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 4:1-30

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"

8 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

12 Jesus answered, "It is said: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Luke 4:4, 8, 12

Meditation

Three responses. Three references to the scriptures Jesus had been taught growing up. In football, the best defense against a team that runs the ball a majority of the time is to position as many defensive players close to the line of scrimmage as possible. It makes it a challenge to defend a pass. Our best spiritual defense against every temptation is knowledge of the scriptures. In principle, Jesus was tempted with a run and a pass. He responded with the law found in Deuteronomy each time. The scriptures give us clarity on how to resist temptation and at the same time be confident in the authority we have in each situation. Many people think clergy often encourage listeners or readers to know the Bible because it is what we are supposed to do and are part of some incentive program. I am in total agreement that part of my responsibility is to encourage everyone to know and understand the scriptures, but not because I'm supposed to or there is personal gain involved. I do it because I believe what it says regarding how I should live and I believe it is the answer to every temptation that comes my way. I believe much more about scripture but in regard to Jesus being tempted in the desert, these two things stand out. Evil and temptation will back down when we stand on the authority of God's word. Jesus modeled it first thing in his ministry and we should follow. You may not have great skill in memorizing scripture, but each of us has the ability to know and believe the principles of scripture. Dig in and learn. It will be valuable on the day you are tempted and have nowhere else to turn. It's our best defense.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, give us a spirit of desire to learn the truths of your word and a spirit of discernment to understand and apply the truths. When temptation comes our way give us great ability to recall what you have planted in our heart. Evil will flee in the presence of your word! We believe and we claim that truth. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Ash Wednesday Worship Service

Prayer Focus - Your position and posture as you enter the season of Lent.

Sermon -

"A Call to Consecration" - Joel 2:12-17

How did you experience the presence of the Holy Spirit during worship?

What did you learn from the message today?

How do you need to consecrate yourself to prepare for your journey to the cross and the tomb?

Day 2 - Thursday, February 19, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 4:30-44

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

31 Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath he taught the people. 32 They were amazed at his teaching, because his words and message had authority. . . . 36 All the people were amazed and said to each other, "What words these are! With authority and power he gives orders to impure spirits and they come out!" 37 And the news about him spread throughout the surrounding area. . . . 42 At daybreak, Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. - Luke 4:31-32, 36-37, 42

Meditation

I've provided a verse or two from several places in our reading today because they help capture several principles. Driving out evil spirits and healing many people demonstrate one piece of the many pieces of Jesus' ministry. Those who witnessed these miracles in Capernaum used two words to describe what they had heard and seen. Authority and power. Luke used the term amazed to describe their reaction. When people are amazed because authority and power are demonstrated it is impactful to say the least. Then we read the people did not want Jesus to leave their city. When lives are changed people take notice! The reading today are stories told by a physician of Jesus doing something a physician couldn't do. But one who speaks with authority and power can. Jesus operates in our lives today with the same power and authority. Our need might not be an evil spirit or a fever, but it is something that Jesus cares about just as much and has authority and power over it in the very same way. From those things we might think are insignificant to the most heart wrenching pain we have ever experienced, Jesus cares and can be the healer and deliverer. We have to invite and allow Jesus to do what only he can do. And when he does you will be like the people of Capernaum, amazed. And similarly, you will never want him to leave. The good news is he never leaves. Because of the presence of the Holy Spirit, he never leaves. And if he never leaves and often we experience his authority and power, the news will spread throughout the area. Allow Jesus to exercise his authority and power at the very point of your greatest need today.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we lay at your feet the things in our life that need the touch of your power and authority. Take hold of us and do what only you can do. From big to small, do what only you can do. We invite you and yield to your desire for us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 3 - Friday, February 20, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 5:1-16

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

3 He (*Jesus*) got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.
4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." - Luke 5:3-4

Meditation

Every single person of faith has their faith tested. Mine as well. There are times when we feel like the test is extremely hard and we begin to question. Simon, soon to be commonly known as Peter, had an extreme test of faith in his very first encounter with Jesus. It was part of his calling to become one of the apostles, the first twelve chose to follow Jesus. For Simon, this test of faith had to have been in the category of extremely hard. He was a fisherman by trade and had been at his craft all night. It was a bad night of fishing as his basket was empty, or as it would have been in my case growing up, his stringer had no fish on it. And Jesus comes along, gets in his boat, taught the crowd for a while, and then the bombshell directed at Simon when he told him to go right back out into the water where he came from, the deep, and let down his nets. Simon hesitated, a moment of questioning his faith, but then did what Jesus asked him to do. And you know the results. He caught so many fish he had to call his friends in the other boat to come help. At that he was called to follow Jesus. In our times of greatest testing, Jesus asks us to go out into the deep waters of faith and trust that Jesus will lead us correctly. We do not usually have the same clarity of direction that Simon did, but we must trust in the murkiness of the moment that all the promises of Jesus are true and the presence of the Holy Spirit will guide us through the test of faith we find ourselves in. I believe the deep waters for us means going out into the depth of our relationship with Jesus and going a little further, trusting a little greater, becoming more intimate with him. Simon hesitated, then obediently followed the command of Jesus which led to the ups and downs of his kingdom impact. Go deeper when you are being surrounded by temptation or circumstances stretching your faith to the breaking point. Trust that Jesus will not let you break.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we want to hear from you in whatever circumstance we are currently dealing with or whatever temptation lies before us. Lead us to the deep waters of relationship when we cast our nets. May our faith grow deeper and deeper every single day in our walk with you. We believe you will not let us drown in the waters of life. You are our rescuer and redeemer in all of life and we claim that over our life today. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 4 - Saturday, February 21, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 5:17-39

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

27 After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, 28 and Levi got up, left everything and followed him. 29 Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. - Luke 5:27-29

Meditation

When Levi (Matthew) was called to be one of the twelve disciples, he threw a party. Few translations will use the word party but in their day it would have looked much more like a party than a banquet. It would have been lots of people, lots to eat and lots to drink, and an atmosphere of celebration. Think about what happened. Levi was so excited Jesus picked him he threw a party. If you are a follower of Christ, if you've accepted the invitation to believe and follow Jesus, you've been personally called in the same way Levi was called. When we read this text, nine times out of ten we will focus on the Pharisees' complaining and Jesus' response. It was perfect. "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (vs. 32) It is certainly a time to party when we understand repentance and respond to the call of Christ and follow him. Levi was called to give his life to Christ and was called to a particular assignment. It was such an honor to be called he threw a party! Beyond repentance and salvation, when we sense God's calling to an assignment or ministry we often feel great weight or responsibility and even wish God was calling someone else. When God calls, we should start organizing a party. Understand the honor placed on you when it's clear God is calling. He could have called others but he called you. He sees something in you that he sees in no one else. I've done it, we've all done it. We've shied away. We've sank into the background hoping nobody will notice. It's inescapable. When God calls, we have no choice but to listen and obey. It's not a chore, it's an honor and worthy of a party. Your unique place in the kingdom deserves the best. A party called a banquet.

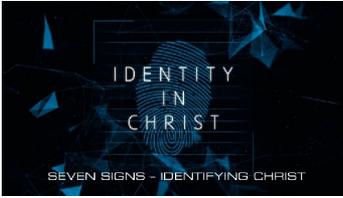
Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for every time you have called us to have a significant role in the kingdom of God. Forgive us for making excuses and ignoring what we know is true. Let us live into the party atmosphere that when you call you knew what you were doing and who needed to be called. Help us receive our assignments with joy. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Sunday - February 22, 2026

First Sunday of Lent

Prayer Focus - Your worship experience today.



Sermon Series:

"Seven Signs - Identifying Christ"

During the Sundays of Lent, I invite you to consider three questions. They will be the same each week, but will apply to the particular "Sign" or "Miracle" of Jesus from the Gospel of John the sermon focuses on.

Today's Sermon -

"Turning Around" - John 2:1-11

How did you experience the presence of the Holy Spirit during worship?

What did you learn from the message today?

What does Jesus need to turn around in your life?

Sundays are often equated with Sabbath. Take a few minutes to:

Reflect - *on what you have learned from God's Word this week*

Reset - *worship with fellow sojourners*

Realign - *your mind, body and spirit*

Day 5 - Monday, February 23, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 6:1-26

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

12 One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. 13 When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: 14 Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, 15 Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, 16 Judas son of James (Thaddeus), and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. - Luke 6:12-16

Meditation

It is that time of the year when there is a lot of choosing going on, lists being made, especially in the school system and families making final vacation plans. Pre-registration is happening in many places to secure places determining who gets in and who looks elsewhere in the Fall. Yes, that far ahead. Teams and groups are being sorted out from many potential candidates. Jesus went away to pray and one thing on his prayer list was choosing twelve. These would be the people who would walk alongside him, be a support system and do what he was doing. Ultimately Jesus wanted them to become like him. Choosing twelve and eventually replacing one happened initially to begin a movement. We now live in something like a self-nominating system. When the dawn of salvation awakens in our life, we become followers, disciples, as such. We are not beginning a movement, we are continuing a movement and our roles are not much different. We walk alongside Christ, we are a support system for the movement, and we do what Christ did and still does. The specifics may not be the same, but the principles remain. We are to be disciples, fully devoted followers of Christ. Unfortunately, we find ourselves in a time when followers want to follow some of the time and don't want to follow at other times and have convinced themselves it's ok to be that way. They are trying to create a convenient relationship with Christ. When we choose to follow Christ, we are choosing a full-time commitment. Living any other way is defined as hypocrisy and that is not advancing the kingdom movement at all. We need unbelievers to see followers of Christ following in every single instance of their life. We are all called to be a disciple. You may not experience Christ choosing you on a mountainside, but he chose you to be a follower and in following we are to live out becoming like him.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we once again receive our calling today and seek to be fully devoted as we become like you. Help us to understand our calling as not just walking alongside you but doing what you do. We are incapable of living this way without your presence and we ask you to join us in the journey. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 6 - Tuesday, February 24, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 6:27-49

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

46 "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" - Luke 6:46

Meditation

Jesus asks a very penetrating question to his disciples. Go back to verse 20. You might say there were many other people in the crowd that heard this rather lengthy teaching, but he looked at his disciples and began to speak. After some very difficult teaching Jesus asks the question in verse 46. To his disciples. Oh, other people heard him because they were listening in to what was being said, but he was directing the question to the inner circle, to those 12 chosen to follow him and do as he was doing. I'm convicted this morning the question applies to me and frankly to all of us if it applied to the group of 12, the disciples. It is forcing me to examine my own life and see if I can find anything which is disobedient to what the Lord is telling me to do. I have to continue reading about building a solid foundation and need to examine my own heart to see I am truly building a solid foundation for this moment in my life or am I assuming the foundation I have is good enough. We want the foundation that can withstand the storm not the one the storm totally washes away. Consider your foundation this morning and be honest enough to hear the question Jesus asks his disciples. Don't default into claiming you are not part of the target audience of the question because you aren't in the inner circle. At this point in the redemption story we are living in, if you claim to be following Christ, if you call him Lord, Lord, the question applies to your life just like it does mine. The question is relevant to all of us and warrants being asked frequently. Live into the question Jesus asked his disciples as you seek to live as a disciple of his throughout the day.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we hear you as you plant the question in our heart. Let us be fully honest and transparent and we seek the ways we do not do what you ask us to do. Mold us, fill us, use us to do the obedient things to be a disciple. May our witness lead someone to a better place of relationship with you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 7 - Wednesday, February 25, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 7:1-23

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

9 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel." 10 Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well. - Luke 7:9-10

Meditation

A Gentile, a Roman centurion, who had only known of Jesus just a short amount of time, is acknowledged as having greater faith than all the people of Israel. By Jesus himself. Folks, plain and simple, you want to be on the other side of the ledger from those who think they have great faith and exhibit little faith. Jesus' statement was really a dagger in the heart of the Jews. You do not want to be among those deemed living with little faith yet thinking they have great faith. Note that the centurion sent for Jesus then later sent others out to stop him because he didn't think he was worthy of Jesus coming. There are many things about this story of a centurion and his servant one could speculate about, including his actual relationship with Jesus. Here's what we do know. Jesus, regardless of whether the centurion believed He was the Savior, deemed his actions as exhibiting great faith and he healed the servant. Possibly this ends the speculation. Jesus saw into the heart of the centurion just like he sees into our heart. People may look at us and think we are doing something for all the wrong reasons yet God acts on our behalf. Purity of heart is an important characteristic we should be striving for as followers of Christ. We will undoubtedly be like the centurion and just need to walk in the understanding of what Christ can do even if we haven't sorted out all the details. And ask. Be a person of great faith.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for being understanding and moving in our life when it would appear you wouldn't. Strengthen us in our faith so we might be a person of great faith. Forgive us for often being people of little faith. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 8 - Thursday, February 26, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 7:24-50

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

47 "Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little." 48 Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." 49 The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" 50 Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." - Luke 7:47-50

Meditation

This story. One of the most powerful stories from the three year ministry of Jesus. It's almost unimaginable because a Pharisee invites Jesus to dinner. A woman who is clearly uninvited walks into the house. She is a sinner! Then Jesus answered the thought, not words spoken out loud, of the Pharisee. It's a script you cannot make up. Both Luke and the Pharisee declare she is a woman who lived a life of sin and the Pharisee is a bit taken back that Jesus would even associate with her. This story. Tears and expensive perfume poured out by a sinful woman upon a sin-forgiving Savior. A forgiven woman with many sins who expressed great love. Her faith saved her and her love abounded. The other guests questioned the validity of Jesus and his ability to forgive sins. The illustration Jesus told the Pharisees and others pulls us into the story. I doubt any of us would be bold enough to claim to be a fifty denarii sinner. We fall into the five hundred category. We have been forgiven much, therefore we are to love much. We should show great love for the depth of forgiveness each of us has experienced. Yes, the reality is, humbly considered, we are people of many sins just like this woman. And yes, our faith through the goodness of God's grace saves us as well. Therefore, let us love with the greatness of a person who has been forgiven much. Go in peace.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we pour out tears and expensive perfume in recognition of your great love for us. We pray for forgiveness of our many sins and pray we will love much because of the recognition of our forgiveness. We confess. We repent. We desire to live in love. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 9 - Friday, February 27, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 8:1-25

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

16 "No one lights a lamp and hides it in a clay jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, they put it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light. 17 For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open. 18 Therefore consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they think they have will be taken from them." - Luke 8:16-18

Meditation

When considering light and its spiritual meaning, the three most common meanings which come to mind are the light of Christ which gives life to us, we are to reflect the light of Christ so others might experience the light of Christ, and light exposes all the things related to darkness. There are others but those are the most common in my mind. The above three verses start off as if Jesus was referring to shining light so everyone can see the light of Christ, and he may be, but quickly turns inward to exposing the darkness within us. The first verse we are somewhat comfortable with because the focus appears is outward for the benefit of others. The last two verses can become a little hard to swallow. The last two verses are important and should not be ignored. As children we loved a good game of hide and seek. There was a tremendous amount of excitement if you were "it" and you found someone hiding. Adults play hide and seek with God. There is very little excitement when we realize God knows what is hidden in our hearts and we want to try and continue the game and hide again. The verse says nothing can be hidden or concealed. We might think we have a good hiding place but soon we realize God knows. Wouldn't it be much easier if we came to grips with the fact that God knows already and what we think is hidden from Him will one day be disclosed to our understanding? I think so. We experience more peace in our heart when we are honest and transparent in spirit and don't have difficult days of revelation of what we have been trying to hide. We can be deceived into believing that hiding from God is the right thing to do and we will deal with an issue in our own time. What's hidden will always gnaw at your spirit when it is intentionally trying to be hidden. One day all things will be known. Honesty and transparency with God is the best way.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we reveal all things in our heart today so that nothing is hidden. Show us the things that are hidden we don't know about so we can lay them at your feet. Do not let us be deceived into believing that which is not true and right. We thank you for loving us so much and assuring us that we are your children that we can be open in every way to you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 10 - Saturday, February 28, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 8:26-56

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

38 The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, 39 "Return home and tell how much God has done for you." So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him. - Luke 8:38-39

Meditation

Your story is the best story ever! It is the story you can tell the best. We all have a story, a story of what God has done for us. Just like this demon-possessed man who was set free, we have a story of a miracle God worked within us to set us free. Our miracle will not involve a demon that possessed our soul and caused us to speak and act violently, but it does involve a demon that was destroying our soul or our life in some way or another. For most people, the grace of Jesus Christ which we received to deliver us from the demon of sin and death and redeem our relationship with God, is the miracle we speak of. It is first and foremost the miracle we should talk about and the story which points clearly to how much God has done for us. For many other people, there are particular sins or habits which may or may not be included in our salvation story but they have been rescued from and are absolutely things that God has done for you. To use the language of this story, if you are reading this and as I write this, I'm confident there will be a demon in the future we will need deliverance from. It might not fall into the major category, but it will be tearing away at your soul and when you experience the miracle working power of God, you will include it when you tell your story. In this early stage of Jesus' ministry, this is one of the few times Jesus told a person who was healed to go tell everybody. Jesus does the opposite later in this chapter. It would be a long discussion to explain why he told this man to tell his story and told others not to, but we can learn from this one. Our story of what God has done for us is the best story available to us to spread the good news of what Jesus Christ can do in each of our lives. Tell your story. It's good. And it has the potential to lead to a changed life forever and someone spends eternity in heaven because you told your story!

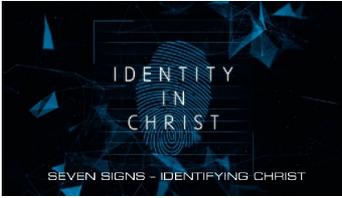
Prayer

Heavenly Father, give us courage and open the doors so that we might "walk the town and tell people what Jesus has done for us." We confess that we will want to see results, but we leave the results in your hands and trust that telling our story will have an impact on your kingdom movement. Use our story to help bring redemption to a person, or persons, who need a miracle to set them free. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Sunday - March 1, 2026

Second Sunday of Lent

Prayer Focus - Your worship experience today.



Sermon Series:

“Seven Signs - Identifying Christ”

During the Sundays of Lent, I invite you to consider three questions. They will be the same each week, but will apply to the particular “Sign” or “Miracle” of Jesus from the Gospel of John the sermon focuses on.

Today's Sermon -

“Timing is Everything” - John 4:46-54

How did you experience the presence of the Holy Spirit during worship?

What did you learn from the message today?

How have you experienced the timing of Jesus?

Sundays are often equated with Sabbath. Take a few minutes to:

Reflect - *on what you have learned from God's Word this week*

Reset - *worship with fellow sojourners*

Realign - *your mind, body and spirit*

Day 11 - Monday, March 2, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 9:1-36

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

18 Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say I am?" 19 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life." 20 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "God's Messiah." . . . 23 Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. - Luke 9:18-20, 23-24

Meditation

The question Jesus asked the disciples about his identity is found in three of the gospels and the most quoted is Matthew's version. It contains the emphatic response I love to preach about and most love to quote. "You are Christ, the Son of the living God!" However, Luke is the only one who recorded the next verses, a portion of which I included for us to consider. There is a connection between Peter's declaration and Jesus' response that we don't need to ignore because it gives definition to what it means to make the declaration and live out the declaration. Bold statements are only bold statements unless our life backs up the statement. The two verses about denying ourselves and taking up our cross and saving and losing our life are easily skipped over because they point to the sacrificial aspect of following Jesus. If we truly want Jesus to transform our life into something better and continue that process throughout our life, we must always be willing to grapple with the idea of what must be denied in our life, how we are taking up our cross, and what we must lose to gain life. If we ignore the process, then we are only making a bold declaration that will ultimately be meaningless. Think of it this way. Consider your spiritual life full, not mature, but full to your capacity of understanding. In order for something to enter a full space, something has to be removed. We talk about salvation in terms of removing sin and death and replacing it with life in Christ. The subtraction to allow addition principle is applicable all through the process of maturing in Christ. Denying and losing is about what we set aside in order to take on more of Christ and live for him. It's hard at times, no one will argue that fact. We must walk through the difficulty of denying ourselves or losing part of our life in order to fully take up our cross and live out the bold declaration we all want to make about our relationship with Christ, "God's Messiah." "You are Christ, the Son of the living God!"

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we pause to give you thanks for sending your Son to be our Messiah, our Savior, our Redeemer. Now guide and strengthen us to live in the truth of the bold declaration of who He is. Help us see clearly the places of denial and what we must set aside in order to gain more of Christ in our life. Forgive us for only making the declaration. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 12 - Tuesday, March 3, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 9:37-62

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

57 As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." . . . 62 Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." - Luke 9:57, 62

Meditation

In between these verses there is discussion about places to lie down, funerals, and good-byes. They seem like harsh words but Jesus was driving home the point about cost. Not the cost of a hotel room, a vault, or living on your own, but the cost of following him. If we are joining this man on the road and declaring we will follow Jesus wherever he goes we must be willing to fully understand the cost of walking alongside him. The in-between illustrations are not to make us feel guilty or disrespect anyone, but to make sure our alignment with Christ is where it should be and our heart is being transformed into something resembling his. In other words, Christ must be first in our lives. To dig deep into that thought is difficult but I invite you to do it. We are in a season of journeying to the cross with Jesus. Along the way He checked his alignment with His Father. And so should we. The cost of following Jesus is high, most days beyond our reach unless we are fully engaged with the presence of God's spirit in our life. But worth it all.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we want to be fit for the kingdom so we ask that you show us whatever in our life is standing between you and us. If there is anything taking priority in our life ahead of you, please reveal it to us. Forgive us for allowing you to be number two or number three in our life. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 13 - Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 10:1-24

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

1 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. 2 And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. 3 Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. 4 Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. 5 Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' 6 And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. 7 And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house." - Luke 10:1-7

Meditation

Some will welcome you. Some will not. Some will be wolves that are hungry and will attack. Others will let you peaceably remain among them. Joining Jesus in kingdom work is building relationships with people who will accept you with open arms or reject you as a wolf attacking a lamb. We will encounter both situations and both are part of being a laborer in the world for the sake of the kingdom. Ours is not to judge the house but to enter the house with the transforming power and good news of Jesus Christ. We will know if there is a welcoming spirit or a spirit of rejection. (vs. 5-6) Please know that you are not being rejected but the message you bring is being rejected. This section of scripture is often troubling because it says there will be times when we leave business unfinished. Paul had to leave things unfinished and at times forbidden to even go to an area. When peace is not ultimately extended in the relationship building process then your labor becomes more about the greater good for the kingdom of God than one person. This principle tends to make me and most people uncomfortable but it is the tenor of the text. We all want to be the person who leaves the ninety-nine to pursue the one. But the text does say we give each 'house' an opportunity to extend the hand of peace before moving on. Our role is to be a laborer. God is in charge of the harvest. The very seed you plant may be harvested at a later time and never known by those involved in the early planting process.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we yield to you to become faithful laborers in the fields of this world so there might be a bountiful harvest for the kingdom. Give us wisdom as you use us to serve. Help us to discern the son of peace. Give clarity as to when to move on but do not let us leave until you are finished. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 14 - Thursday, March 5, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 10:25-42

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

41 "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." - Luke 10:41-42

Meditation

Once every four years we experience leap year. People who are born in a leap year on the extra day in February get to celebrate their birthday on the actual date. There are times when we look around, pause and evaluate, and find ourselves needful of so many things in order to be satisfied and we need an extra day. Martha had invited a house guest and probably told her sister Mary that Jesus was on his way. Martha envisioned many things needing to be done like dusting the furniture, making sure the pillows were straight on the couch, washing the dishes, preparing a meal and cleaning the bathrooms. Mary envisioned one thing being needful. Sitting at the feet of Jesus. We would all welcome situations where only one thing was needed to navigate to the next situation, especially in the hectic nature of our lives. Mary found herself in that place and was not going to let anything get in her way of the one thing she needed. Not even her sister's persistence that she should help prepare for this very special house guest would stop her from sitting and listening. That's what she needed and most likely we all could stand to learn from Mary and find time to simply sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to Him speak into our heart. Time when we can set aside all things that need to be done to do the one thing that needs to be done. Multitasking is a common buzz word these days. So is time management. Applying those two concepts spiritually will teach us to manage our time wisely in order to include time avoiding the multitasking urge and sitting at the feet of Jesus. In these moments, sitting and listening should capture all our attention and focus. While there, Jesus just might tell you exactly what you need to hear today.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we invite an opportunity to sit at your feet today. If given that opportunity, give us wise discernment to know it and simply sit and listen. Don't let anything distract us from our alone time with you. Help us see the importance of what you will say to us. For the moment, let us be Mary. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 15 - Friday, March 6, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 11:1-28

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

8 I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs. 9 "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. 11 "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" - Luke 11:9-13

Meditation

The disciples often witnessed the prayer life of Jesus. One day after He had finished praying, they asked Him to teach them to pray. He taught them with the model we call the Lord's Prayer. Jesus then illustrates and concludes with the statement about receiving because of boldly asking. Then he gives practical application to make sure the disciples understand. Parents of small children receive hundreds of requests each and most every day from children who have perceived needs in their life. Some of them are truly something they need, some of them are marginal, and some of them are purely wants. Parents will run the request through some sense of evaluation and determine an answer. Legit need, yes. Legit need but a better solution than requested, yes with modification. So on and so forth. Because of the specifics of the illustration and application Luke used, it appears our prayers will be answered when we pray boldly and specifically. And very well they can be. It's not guaranteed but is often the case. And often the case it is not. Every time, regardless of the request, the Holy Spirit will be given to those who ask. The answer may not be in the specifics as we have envisioned, but in the impartation of the Holy Spirit to better meet the need than we have the capacity to envision. Ask boldly, and prayer will be answered specifically according to God's will. A case can be made for the uncertainty of what one receives or finds or the result of a door being opened, but there is absolute certainty related to the giving of the Holy Spirit. Our assurance of the right answer comes in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we pray boldly for the perfect answer each and every time we ask, seek, and knock. We believe you have the perfect answer because of your perfection. And we believe you want the best for your children and have us at the center of your heart. Grant us grace and mercy and understanding when we pray and impart in us a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 16 - Saturday, March 7, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 11:29-54

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

37 When Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee invited him to eat with him; so he went in and reclined at the table. 38 But the Pharisee was surprised when he noticed that Jesus did not first wash before the meal. 39 Then the Lord said to him, "Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. 40 You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also?" - Luke 11:37-40

Meditation

Confrontation is always uncomfortable no matter what our position in the confrontation is. Whether it is conflict resolution or correction, it is never pleasant. Consider the Pharisees who were always opposing and questioning in order to catch him saying something wrong in their minds. After being invited by a Pharisee to share a meal, the relentless nature of opposition began because they thought Jesus did something improper. What follows is some of the harshest words Jesus spoke directly aimed at a group of people. So harsh Jesus began each statement with the words, "Woe to you Pharisees." Each statement directly confronted the Pharisees with their behavior which was inconsistent with their belief system. When what we believe is not reflected in how we behave, ungodliness is always the result. Jesus clearly made the point that God created us inside and out and living righteously requires us to seek holiness of heart and life. Holiness of heart is what we believe. Holiness of life is how we behave. The two are inseparable. The very last thing we want is to have a spiritual confrontation with Jesus where he provides examples of how our beliefs and our behavior don't match up. You, like me, might say been there, done that. If so, you know how uncomfortable the encounter is. The good news is when those uncomfortable moments happen, all of who Jesus is comes into play and we are given every opportunity to fully experience the mercy and grace of our Lord and Savior. However, the opportunity involves changing what warranted the confrontation with Jesus. An unwillingness to change will get us right back where we started if we choose not to take advantage of Christ's offer of mercy and grace. In everyday life, most people love to avoid confrontation. Seek to live in such a way as to avoid a spiritual confrontation with Jesus.

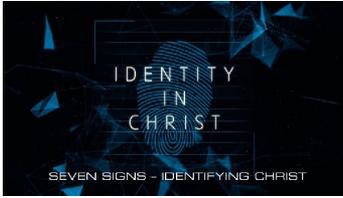
Prayer

Heavenly Father, reveal us to the areas in our life where what we believe and who we say we are is inconsistent with how we behave and express ourselves. Remind us of the areas of correction Jesus spoke about to the Pharisees because some might apply to us. Prick our spirit to these areas and convict us to be changed and transformed. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Sunday - March 8, 2026

Third Sunday of Lent

Prayer Focus - Your worship experience today.



Sermon Series:

"Seven Signs - Identifying Christ"

During the Sundays of Lent, I invite you to consider three questions. They will be the same each week, but will apply to the particular "Sign" or "Miracle" of Jesus from the Gospel of John the sermon focuses on.

Today's Sermon -

"Validation Codes" - John 5:1-15

How did you experience the presence of the Holy Spirit during worship?

What did you learn from the message today?

What do you need Jesus validate about your life?

Sundays are often equated with Sabbath. Take a few minutes to:

Reflect - *on what you have learned from God's Word this week*

Reset - *worship with fellow sojourners*

Realign - *your mind, body and spirit*

Day 17 - Monday, March 9, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 12:1-34

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

29 And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it.
30 For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. 31 But seek *first* his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. - Luke 12:29-31

Meditation

Surrounded by admonitions about worry and accumulating abundance, the most important admonition of all are these words, seek *first* his kingdom. The italicized *first* is my addition to remind us of Jesus' words in Matthew. It is so natural to worry and even more natural to strive for security for yourself and your family. When these tendencies become unhealthy, overcoming them is not easy by any stretch of the imagination. I worry, you worry, we all worry. We worry for the right reasons and we worry for the wrong reasons. A brief explanation about the biblical use of the words worry and anxiety might be helpful. When used in scripture, they are referring to an emotion not just in a moment but over a long period of time which leads to a debilitating emotion both naturally and spiritually. The grammatical tense of the words in the original language teach us this. For instance, we should in healthy ways worry, be concerned, about the well-being of our children. It becomes unhealthy when the worry over a long period turns into preventing them from maturing into adults. Additionally, worry and anxiety can turn into a desire for security and abundance which quickly turns into greed. Jesus knew these were real temptations and he simply says after repeated illustrations about provision, seek his kingdom. It seems like a simple answer but it is so true and pretty much is a linear equation. The more we become kingdom minded the more we will trust in a holy God and the more we will experience His provision and therefore the less we will worry and the less we will stockpile for ourselves. Yes, seek *first* his kingdom.

Prayer

Heavenly Father we put our trust in you for all things and especially those things we tend to worry about and when we wonder if we will have enough or if everything will be ok. Help us to place all things in your hands and seek your kingdom. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 18 - Tuesday, March 10, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 12:35-59

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

47 "The servant who knows the master's will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows. 48 But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked." - Luke 12:47-48

Meditation

First round draft choices in any sport come with high expectations. Top ten draft choices come with higher expectations. The number one pick in any draft comes with the highest expectations. They are all athletes, all get dressed the same way, breathe the same air, and play by the same rules. Much more is expected of some than others. The much you have been given does not look like the much that I have been given. We have been entrusted with knowledge about Christ and understanding about readiness for his coming and we are to use that for much more. You can take this passage to mean a lot of different things but if you take it in context, it's about understanding and preparedness. What is demanded or asked is that we share the wealth of those two with others. The consequences of not yielding to what we know or being ill prepared are not good. The context is difficult. The consequences are worse. The haunting question is why would we not want to use our knowledge of Christ and his coming to help others find their way to transformation and hope? We most likely all want to do more for the kingdom and we must lean into our faith in Him to lead us to the people and circumstances of being able to do more for God's kingdom on earth. The will of the Father is to participate in helping His will in heaven be done on earth. We can do more if we allow Him to guide our steps. We have indeed been given much and much more is being asked.

Prayer

Heavenly Father grant us the ability and power to act on what we know and do much more than we think is necessary. Whatever you demand or whatever you ask we seek the heart to respond with grace and mercy. Forgive us when we have failed to understand or be ready. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 19 - Wednesday, March 11, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 13:1-17

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

14 Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue ruler said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath." 15 The Lord answered him, "**You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie your ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? 16 Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?"** 17 When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing. - Luke 13:14-17

Meditation

The synagogue ruler must have been somewhat nervous about speaking directly to Jesus about his indignation over work being done on the Sabbath so he spoke to the people and Jesus overheard. Given human nature, he probably intended it that way. Unfortunately for the ruler, Jesus answered and made it even worse. His indignation quickly escalated to humiliation. This is not the only story we read where Jewish leaders were upset about work being done on the Sabbath. It was clearly in the Law and Jews were very strict about Sabbath law in particular. I'm sure the woman who was healed heard the ruler's indignation and became anxious about what people would think and how she would be perceived. It appears Jesus responded immediately and struck at the heart of legalism. Jesus used a direct comparison accusing the ruler and his friends of being guilty of what they are accusing Jesus of doing. The discussion ends. You might have been in the shoes of the ruler before. With fervor we accuse others of wrongdoing and all of a sudden, the same or similar accusations are directed at us. There is no response other than remaining quiet and moving on. Jesus came to usher in the new covenant of transformation, spiritually, physically and emotionally. The good news is about holistic transformation of humanity and legalism would have prevented this from coming to fruition for this woman after being cripple for eighteen years. Guardrails are necessary in life. Our spiritual guardrail is the word of God so beautifully given to us in the scriptures. A key component of our guardrail is grace which is central to Jesus' message of transformation. Grace within the bounds of our scriptural guardrail keeps the guardrail from becoming legalism. We should welcome the transforming power of Jesus in all areas of our life and the life of others because it is the best thing that can happen for all of us.

Prayer

Heavenly Father we welcome your transforming power into our life to make us whole in every way. We welcome this in the lives of others even when we might have questions. Help us to celebrate the manifestation of your power in the world. Do not let legalism or narrow mindedness creep into our heart and mind. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 20 - Thursday, March 12, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 13:18-35

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

22 Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. 23 Someone asked him, "Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?" He said to them, 24 "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to." - Luke 13:22-24

Meditation

Warning labels adorn almost every food or product you pick up. Commercials for food, medicine, and cars contain disclaimers or warnings. Purchase an extension cord and it has four or five. Those tags have been on mattresses for years warning us not to remove them. Very few of these labels do we pay close attention to unless we are particularly interested in maybe a food allergy or the like. Warning labels are generally ignored. Unfortunately, we treat scripture the same way. The Bible contains many warnings about a wide variety of subjects from sin to salvation. They are hard to take. We don't want to pay attention. We skip over or we just tear them off and throw them away. Especially when it comes to salvation, we don't want to recognize the warnings. Jesus is giving us a warning signal here and we need to pay attention. As the answer to a direct question about salvation his reply includes the concept of a narrow door and some not able to enter. The pathway to salvation is not difficult but it is narrow. Living out salvation in surrender and obedience is often very difficult but there is clarity about the availability of the narrow door. The door is available to every person who chooses to enter. We should first be very attentive to our own relationship with Christ and be very sure the door we entered was narrow and not wide and popular. Then we should be attentive to our role of disciples producing disciples who produce disciples. Our relationship with Christ should be lived out in obedience to his word and in an attractive manner always pointing people to the narrow door. This is one warning we should heed.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we pray that we have clarity to see the narrow door and have walked through it with boldness and understanding. We pray we might live in obedience and surrender to your will. We pray for those choosing today between a narrow door of truth and a wide door of deception. Use us in their life and help them choose wisely. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 21 - Friday, March 13, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 14:1-35

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

28 "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? 29 For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, 30 saying, "This person began to build and wasn't able to finish." - Luke 14:28-30

Meditation

Finishing well. This concept appears in many different conversations whether it's used in reference to athletic competition, leadership, or our relationship with Christ to name a few. The entire chapter we read today is focused on the invitation to follow, excuses we make not to follow, and the cost of following if we choose to. The verses I've chosen today are part of the discussion about the cost. Jesus shares a parable about construction and counting the cost in order to finish the project. There is ridicule awaiting if the tower is not finished. We can identify. You've driven by construction projects that were started, stopped for some reason, and all you see are weeds growing up around what still stands. You might not call your reaction ridicule, but I'm sure you thought it didn't end well. There could be a very legitimate reason or it might be the failure to count the cost. Jesus' emphasis was on finishing, I added the word well just because that is my nature. If I start anything, I want to finish well. I'm confident I'm not the only one. We certainly want to stay strong in our relationship with Christ and not fall into complacency and indifference. We certainly want to finish, and I would say let's finish well. Let's include in the cost of discipleship the understanding we will finish this life in the greatest measure of intimacy with our Lord and Savior. Pausing often leads to weeds. Our challenge is to show progress in our relationship with Christ at all times so weeds don't appear around our construction site. Finish well.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we seek your presence and power so that we have the strength to always seek a deeper place of intimacy with you and to finish on the mountaintop. Lead us away from the temptation to pause and pursue other interests. Lead us away from the excuse making and help us see the reasons to follow and go deep. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 22 - Saturday, March 14, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 15:1-32

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

8 "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? 9 And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' 10 In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." - Luke 15:8-10

Meditation

Today we read three parables about being found. Three parables about people like me and you discovering Christ. I write about this often but it bears repeating again to remind all of us how special we are in the sight of God. I want you to pause and think about your "found" story. I want you to think about it because your story could be one of the parables of Luke 15. Pause. You may not think your story is significant enough to be included but let me assure you it is. When one discovers Christ there is rejoicing in heaven and the rejoicing is all the same. I think it is safe to say there is no rejoice meter among the angels depending on the nature of a person's "found" story. There is just rejoicing. As we run to the Father, he is running to us and he runs with the same desire for each and every person. Remember, he loves you that much to leave the ninety-nine, to look under the couch, or to run to our filthiness. The truth for each of us is that when sin has been repented of, there is new life in Christ, there is significance in the story, and there is rejoicing among the angels in heaven. As you pause to consider your story, know how much you are loved and whether you realize it or not, God went to great lengths to find you and the promise of His word is that nothing can separate us from his love for us. We have reason to rejoice because no matter how we see ourselves, we are loved enough for the Father to run after us. Live knowing you were found because you are loved beyond what our heart and mind can comprehend.

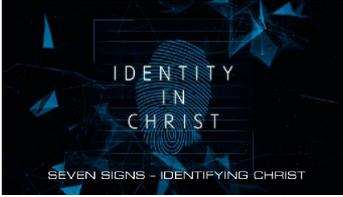
Prayer

Heavenly Father, we praise your holy name for finding us, for passing every obstacle we might have laid in your path and wrapping your loving arms of embrace around us. You found us and we rejoice and give thanks. Let us live fully our story so we might be used by you for others to realize your pursuit of them. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Sunday - March 15, 2026

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Prayer Focus - Your worship experience today.



Sermon Series:

"Seven Signs - Identifying Christ"

During the Sundays of Lent, I invite you to consider three questions. They will be the same each week, but will apply to the particular "Sign" or "Miracle" of Jesus from the Gospel of John the sermon focuses on.

Today's Sermon -

"Abundance" - John 6:1-15

How did you experience the presence of the Holy Spirit during worship?

What did you learn from the message today?

Where do you need godly abundance in your life?

Sundays are often equated with Sabbath. Take a few minutes to:

Reflect - *on what you have learned from God's Word this week*

Reset - *worship with fellow sojourners*

Realign - *your mind, body and spirit*

Day 23 - Monday, March 16, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 16:1-31

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

14 The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. 15 He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God's sight." - Luke 16:14-15

Meditation

The Monday morning big word of the day is omniscient which means God knows all things. We don't even though some people think they do. Case in point. People relate to other people in many different ways because we know people for various reasons. Some people we will simply know their name and maybe a little about them and be able to recognize them on the street. Others we know more intimately and know their life story. We know our immediate family to a much deeper level. The deepest, most intimate level of relationship is how God knows each person He has created. God knows our hearts. Our heart is the seat of every emotion we have which means all the love, loyalty, honor, dislike, grudge, hurt, joy, and the list goes on and on, is birthed in our heart. Putting it simply and plainly, there is nothing about me and you that God doesn't know. Like the Pharisees, we can do whatever we want to please others or justify our actions, but God knows our hearts. We can say whatever we choose in order to make our life appear to be whatever we want, but God knows our hearts. When someone is caught in an act of misbehavior, a statement often used involves being honest. The principle applies to each one of us in our relationship to God. Being honest with God in part means speaking and acting in a way consistent with what we truly believe in our heart. God knows our hearts. The positive side of being honest in our relationship with God is that He knows when we hurt, when we grieve, when we are broken or when we are stressed and we can lean into Him in those situations with full assurance believe He knows and understands. Because we join with Jesus in the fellowship of his suffering and the joy of his resurrection, God knows the full range of what is going on in our hearts. Don't try to be somebody before God that you aren't in your day-to-day activity or try to hide things from Him. Be open at all times. Be honest. He knew the heart of the Pharisees and he knows our heart as well.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before you today with an open heart desiring to be as honest as we can. Forgive us when we try to deceive you when trying to please people and then justify our behavior. Lead us away from the temptations of life which causes conflicts in our relationship with you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 24 - Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 17:1-19

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

15 One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. 16 He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan. 17 Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? 18 Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" 19 Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well." - Luke 17:15-19

Meditation

When contemporary Christian music first began to become popular, Don Moen wrote a song titled, "Give Thanks." The first two lines said, "Give thanks with a grateful heart, Give thanks to the Holy One." I'll never forget it. Churches sang it often because it stated a simple yet powerful truth we often overlook. Jesus passed ten lepers while walking down a road and they all cried out for Jesus to have pity on them, for Jesus to heal them. He gave them some instructions and they did what Jesus asked and they were all healed. Only one comes back to Jesus to give thanks. The Samaritan among them. The foreigner among them. The least likely among them to give thanks to the Jewish leader. Jesus asks him some accusatory questions aimed at the other nine calling them into account for not joining the one to give thanks. Giving thanks is part of the process of God moving in our life when we come before him with need. In a sense it completes the spiritual principle being taught by Jesus. We ask for God's favor and blessing and He answers and we should with grateful hearts, give thanks. What that does is allows Jesus to expand the moment and increase our faith. The nine left walked away thinking they were healed because of what they had done by asking. They will be looking for the next thing they can do to ask and receive a blessing. The one who returned to Jesus and gave thanks learned and realized it was faith that made him whole. What happened to him only Jesus could do. He then knew without a doubt that faith exercises God's work in us. We can try all we want but it is faith that moves God's heart and hand. I believe the Spirit will move in us more often if we live with a grateful heart and pause to give thanks when we have sought the Lord's blessing in our life.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we simply pause this day to give thanks for all the favor and every blessing you have manifested in our life. We give thanks with a grateful heart when you've done what only you can do when we had to bow humbly with great measures of faith to ask you to move in our life. Increase our faith as you answer our cries to you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 25 - Wednesday, March 18, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 17:20-37

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

20 Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you." - Luke 17:20-21

Meditation

The anticipation of something we really look forward to doing will often create excitement too great to keep contained. Whether it's a destination vacation which takes you to a dream location, a concert on your bucket list, or your wedding day, there is great excitement. The opposite is true as well. The anticipation of something we are not sure about often causes great anxiety. I'm not sure which the Pharisees were experiencing when they asked Jesus the question about the kingdom of God. My hunch given their reaction to Jesus' teaching and ministry over the years would lean toward anxiousness. If my hunch is correct, Jesus' reply only heightened their anxiety, probably to the point of nausea. The kingdom Jesus described is not what the Pharisees wanted to hear. But, but, it is the answer every follower of Jesus should want to hear. The excitement we have to the very depths of our soul when we know the kingdom of God is in our heart right now should be the same, maybe far exceed, the excitement of anticipation when thinking about the eternity we will spend with our Father in the kingdom of God called heaven! Jesus made clear the kingdom of God has both a "now" and "then" dimension that we have the privilege of participating in as his disciples. The excitement and joy of walking in the grace of His kingdom now should not be contained, it should overflow into our daily life. I trust you will join me in counting it a great honor to hear the words, "the kingdom of God is within you." I trust you will join me in living to the fullest of understanding of what it means and let your joy overflow. What a special gift the kingdom of God within us truly is!

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of the kingdom of God within my heart and soul. Let me live with joy knowing that truth. In the peaks and valleys of life let my life show forth your kingdom. Guide is into living with honor for all that you have given us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 26 - Thursday, March 19, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 18:1-17

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

1 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. 2 He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. 3 And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'" - Luke 18:1-3

Meditation

Comparisons are an inexact science. Comparing an apple to an orange is an obvious effort in futility unless the only conclusion required is they are both fruits. Full agreement is reached when the comparison is, let's say, apples to apples, until you compare a Honeycrisp apple to a Granny Smith apple and then agreement is difficult. One is sweet, the other is tart. Reading the parable that follows our text leads to a comparison of God and the judge. Or at least an association. Jesus gives us the teaching of the parable, pray and never give up. The point is not comparing the judge to God and coming to the conclusion that God's character is the same as the judge. Note what it says. The judge did not fear God nor care for people. Just the opposite of God's character. The point is to keep praying and not give up, not that God is so uncaring that we have to beg and plead for an answer. It's an apple to orange comparison. The only conclusion we could make is that both had authority. If in fact it is God's desire to be in relationship with his people which is a very clear biblical principle, then the relationship begins on the basis of his love for us and absolute care for our being. Don't see it as begging, see it as clearly declaring the desire of your heart and never giving up on your commitment to let God do what only God can do and see God's will manifested in your life. That's praying and never giving up.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, create in us a sense of understanding of our relationship with you that we clearly know you love us and care for our lives. Help us to fear you at all times and seek to love you with our whole heart. Teach us to pray and give us perseverance to pray. Forgive us for being impatient and giving up. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 27 - Friday, March 20, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 18:18-43

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

6 And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7 And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? 8 I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

- Luke 18:6-8

Meditation

A judge who didn't fear God or care about people. (Side note: Don't be that person.) A widow who had been wronged and nothing was being done. A widow who kept believing that justice would come. And it did because she kept believing. Most often the focus of this parable is on the persistency of the widow but I want to focus on the last phrase which contains a haunting question. Will God find faith among humanity? The favored interpretation of this parable shifts to a future time in Christ but I would contend Jesus is speaking in the present as well as the future. The kingdom of God is just that. The kingdom is now and the kingdom is then, both at the same time. The haunting question is applicable regardless of the position you take on the time frame of this parable. We all believe that Jesus comes into our life repeatedly as he manifests himself in a variety of ways. It's a dual concept. He came and he comes. He never leaves us but he comes. Maybe the idea of coming is the wrong way to look at it because he is always with us. Maybe we should think in terms of responding to a need and acting on our behalf at our request. When he does, will he find faith or just expectation based on perceived position? Faith means we are living into the idea that we believe God will do what only he can do and is impossible for us to conceive. Expectation based on a perceived position implies we might think we are entitled to receive something just because. Don't slide down that slippery slope. Be the person who lives with humble faith, understanding we deserve nothing, only by God's grace and persistent faith do we ever receive from God. Don't be the judge. Fear God and have faith.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we pray with humility and faith asking you move on our behalf today. Move in every person's life who needs a touch from you as they live into their faith. Move mightily in ways only you can. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 28 - Saturday, March 21, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 19:1-27

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

5 When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." 6 So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. 7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner." 8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." 9 Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." - Luke 19:5-10

Meditation

Many of us learned the story of Zacchaeus in Sunday School or Vacation Bible School as a child. We learned it because a teacher read the story and we learned it because we sang the story. "Zacchaeus was a wee little man, a wee little man was he. . . ." Some of you might be able to sing it from start to finish right now. We learned the basic truth of the story that Jesus came for all people, even sinners, to invite them into a personal relationship with Him. Then we moved on and sang about Abraham. As children we didn't dig much deeper to discover additional meaning. We were more interested in game time. We weren't told about serving Christ or phrases like advancing the kingdom. Or the plain truth that Jesus came to seek and save the lost. None of that was mentioned because it fell into the category of difficult material for a three year old or six year old to understand. But we can now. Staying at Zacchaeus' house was natural for Jesus to do because that's what he came to do but at the same time he knew it would create many uncomfortable situations once certain people heard what he was doing. He was willing to deal with the uncomfortable in order to bring salvation to the house of Zacchaeus. When Jesus proclaimed he came to seek and save the lost, he meant all people, Jew and Gentile alike, people from every nation. When we engage our faith in being part of the mission of Jesus, we will find ourselves in places quite unusual and uncomfortable. It happens every day in doing the work of the kingdom of God. When we do what Jesus did and enter into unexpected places in order to build relationships which have every possibility of the lost being found, it will feel unnatural and we will be talked about just like Jesus was. If today a pastor walks into a place the world thinks a pastor shouldn't be, he or she will get talked about and scorned. But a friendship might be established which leads to eternal life to one who was lost. Staying at Zacchaeus' house is risky but worth the eternal reward. Find the house of Zacchaeus and stay there for a while.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we need your direction to find the house of Zacchaeus to enter in. Give us compassion for the heart of the Zacchaeus you lead us to. Give us wisdom and understanding to engage in the relationship building process. Help those you lead us to see Jesus in us. Give us patience in the process. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Sunday - March 22, 2026

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Prayer Focus - Your worship experience today.



Sermon Series:

"Seven Signs - Identifying Christ"

During the Sundays of Lent, I invite you to consider three questions. They will be the same each week, but will apply to the particular "Sign" or "Miracle" of Jesus from the Gospel of John the sermon focuses on.

Today's Sermon -

"Embrace the Mystery" - John 6:16-21

How did you experience the presence of the Holy Spirit during worship?

What did you learn from the message today?

Are you experiencing the mystery of faith?

Sundays are often equated with Sabbath. Take a few minutes to:

Reflect - *on what you have learned from God's Word this week*

Reset - *worship with fellow sojourners*

Realign - *your mind, body and spirit*

Day 29 - Monday, March 23, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 19:28-48

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

47 Every day he was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him. 48 Yet they could not find any way to do it, because all the people hung on his words. - Luke 19:47-48

Meditation

We know the story of the triumphal entry. We will celebrate His grand entry this coming Sunday. We call it Palm Sunday. We know the parade and the celebration. We know about Jesus in the temple area. We know how distraught he was. We know the authorities wanted to kill him. We know. Maybe we don't know. The authorities couldn't find a way to kill Jesus because so many people were hanging on to every word that came out of his mouth. The conclusion being that they not only were clinging to every word but they were in total agreement. The crowds were jumping and shouting and proclaiming Jesus the King long before he made it to Jerusalem because they had seen all the miraculous things he had done. And there was most likely a positive difference in the people that was very noticeable. If not, the authorities could have killed him with the crowd's blessing. There is value in hanging onto every word of Jesus. Most all of us are probably guilty at times of hanging onto some words, casually noticing others and ignoring a few. Let's hang on. And if we hang on, our challenge is to live and speak and have conversation so that others begin to hang on. It's in the hanging on that our life is changed and transformation into his likeness occurs. And maybe if enough Christ-followers will hang on more and more, then our culture will not try to kill Jesus.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, may the words of your mouth be held captive by our minds and hearts. May we live into every word we hear. Forgive us for picking and choosing. Give us a desire to hang on so that no one tries to kill You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 30 - Tuesday, March 24, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 20:1-26

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

21 So the spies questioned him: "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is right, and that you do not show partiality but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. 22 Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" 23 He saw through their duplicity and said to them, 24 "Show me a denarius. Whose image and inscription are on it?" "Caesar's," they replied. 25 He said to them, "Then give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." 26 They were unable to trap him in what he had said there in public. And astonished by his answer, they became silent. - Luke 20:21-26

Meditation

People devise great plans to try to persuade other people to believe something that is really not true or to present an image totally different from reality. The spies came to Jesus with that in mind thinking they could hide from him their true intent. They didn't know who they were dealing with. They knew about him, but didn't know him. Jesus saw right through their plan just like he sees through our plans of trying to hide things from him. Jesus called them out and their plans were thwarted to the point of silence. The awareness of being caught often leads to silence because any answer is inappropriate or just wrong. Hide and Seek was a great game we played as children. I can't imagine how disturbing it was to the neighborhood I grew up in. We were not bashful. We would hide behind anybody's bushes or trees. Rest assured when we try to play hide and seek with Jesus, he sees through our deceitfulness and we will be left silent. Being honest and transparent is a better approach to our relationship with Christ. He would rather journey with us through difficult moments than silence us. He would rather speak the truth in love than speak the truth which silences. The great misconception is that we can in some way deceive Jesus. Nope. He sees right through our plan. And silences us in astonishment. Humble. Honest. Transparent. A much better plan to approach Jesus. He can then speak the truth in love.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come to you today in raw confession of who we are and what we need to become. Even though we sometimes want to trap you and avoid the truth, we come today seeking your truth for our life. We lay before you our true self. Forgive us for any attempt to present ourselves as different than who we are. Speak truth into us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 31 - Wednesday, March 25, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 20:27-47

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

45 While all the people were listening, Jesus said to his disciples, 46 "Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. 47 They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely." - Luke 20:45-47

Meditation

There is a saying in golf that you drive for show and putt for dough, meaning, the long and straight drive is impressive and gets great applause from the crowd but if you are a poor putter, you will not win. Jesus was accusing the teachers of the law of being great drivers and poor putters. What the teachers did to impress people was not a reflection of their true nature. They wanted onlookers to perceive them as godly men yet they lived ungodly lives. And worse, they reveled in all the attention they received. Quite the opposite of what Jesus taught during his ministry and this is one of texts in scripture where the severity of punishment is stated. The call upon our lives as followers of Christ is to live an authentic life. As I have stated often in the past, trying to cast an image to win the popularity contest in our culture leads to horrific consequences. It is energy expended which is clearly wasteful. There is no value in trying to create an image of godliness that does not reflect your heart. Greater impact is achieved for the kingdom of God when we don't pretend to be who we aren't and God accompanies us through the challenges of life. Be humble. Earn respect. Take a seat where nobody else wants to sit. Let honor come in natural ways. Enjoy the reward.

Prayer

Heavenly Father and Gracious God, turn us away from the temptation to gain the respect of people all the while breaking your heart. Forgive us for beating our chest and seeking attention. Show us the humble path of life. Let us live kingdom minded. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 32 - Thursday, March 26, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 21:1-19

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

3 "Truly I tell you," he said, "this poor widow has **PUT IN MORE** than all the others."
- Luke 21:3

Meditation

I'm asking for permission to deviate from the obvious context and meaning of this verse. Thank you for granting it. The woman was poor and did not have much to give. Her gifts were compared to the gifts of the wealthy. Yet, she put in more. In our participation in the kingdom of God, we can consider ourselves poor or wealthy as to what we have to offer. We consider ourselves one or the other based on the value we place on ourselves and our perception of our gifts we have to give. Yet Jesus valued hers greater. First of all we have to put in. So many people just want to take out and never contribute of themselves to the kingdom. Participation is measured by how they are served. When we put in we approach the kingdom wanting to serve and not be served. Next is to never undervalue your gifts as insignificant to kingdom work. Jesus may be looking at your gift of service as more valuable than any other gift offered at the moment. Consider the many ways you can PUT IN to help the gospel be strengthened in your community and around the world. The common phrase about being better to give than receive applies to more than money. It applies to all that God has given you to use for the sake of his kingdom. Be a giver to the kingdom. PUT IN MORE.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, move in our spirit to a new place of putting more in that will be pleasing to you and greatly benefit your kingdom. Give us a giving spirit and remove the idea of only wanting to receive from the gifts of others. Move us to the place of full participation and do not let our assessment of value determine what we do. Let yours. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 33 - Friday, March 27, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 21:20-38

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

32 "Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. 33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." - Luke 21:32-33

Meditation

The end times. Not a subject we love to talk about. Whether it is our current life or the life of humanity at the second coming. But we have to deal with reality of life and the journey we are all on. Life is difficult to navigate for each and every person. No one has "it easy" as some might want to portray. The difficulties become manageable if we will never question the last half of this verse. The words of Christ will never pass away which implies the truth and promises contained in them will always be with us. The context of this verse is Jesus speaking about the end of the age and basically says everything as it now exists will no longer exist because of the new heaven and the new earth. But, and it's a big but, his word will never pass away. We each need to be rock solid in our understanding that His words, and the Word of God which contains them, are true and authoritative for life and practice. I believe there is a direct relationship between the value we place in the Word of God and our ability to deal with all life brings, both the highs and the lows. Live in the joy of knowing that the truth of Christ will never pass away.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, help us to know the truth of your words and let our life reflect them with certain and unwavering belief. Give us the confidence to navigate all that is before us. Make us one with your truth and promises. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 34 - Saturday, March 28, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 22:1-38

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

14 When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. 15 And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." - Luke 22:14-15

Meditation

They were all there, all reclining at the table. They were not being disrespectful, it was the customary position. Judas was there. Peter was there. They were all there. And Jesus looked at them all in the eyes and said he eagerly desired to be at the table with them. Note he just didn't want to be there, he eagerly desired to be there. In other words, he came with great excitement and anticipation. Encounters with Jesus don't always turn out the way we hope or expect. In the previous verses we read that Satan had entered Judas who then went to those who would arrest Jesus and planned it all out. Jesus would then tell those at the table that one of them would betray him. Judas was at the table and he did exactly what was planned and predicted. In the verses that follow we learn that Peter would deny even knowing who Jesus was to a woman in a courtyard most likely in front of a large crowd who heard the exchange. Peter was at the table and he did exactly what Jesus said he would do. We must speculate as to the outcome of Judas' life before he died because we don't know exactly. There would be good cause to believe he repented but we just don't know. Peter is a different story. We know his story and his powerful transformation that led him to be the most prolific evangelist of the early church period. Regardless of the outcome, Jesus eagerly desired to be at the table with both of them and he desires to be at the table with us. It demonstrates how much he loves us even though he knows all things and it demonstrates the distance he will go to pursue us. Both are powerful statements Jesus makes at this most intimate moment with his disciples and a point of raw emotion as he is about to be taken away to his death. He eagerly desires to be present in our lives. Don't miss the opportunity to sit at his table.

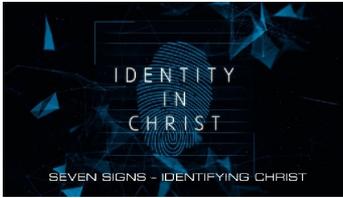
Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for the invitation to sit at your table. Thank you for not judging us for what we have done or what you know we will do. Thank you for your forgiving, loving, pursuing spirit which supersedes our humanness. Help us to be faithful disciples who have been invited to sit at your table because you eagerly desire to sit with all of us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Sunday - March 29, 2026

Palm Sunday - Sixth Sunday of Lent

Prayer Focus - Your worship experience today.



Sermon Series:

"Seven Signs - Identifying Christ"

During the Sundays of Lent, I invite you to consider three questions. They will be the same each week, but will apply to the particular "Sign" or "Miracle" of Jesus from the Gospel of John the sermon focuses on.

Today's Sermon -

"One Thing I Do Know" - John 9:1-12

How did you experience the presence of the Holy Spirit during worship?

What did you learn from the message today?

What do you need to most know right now in your life?

Sundays are often equated with Sabbath. Take a few minutes to:

Reflect - *on what you have learned from God's Word this week*

Reset - *worship with fellow sojourners*

Realign - *your mind, body and spirit*

Day 35 - Monday, March 30, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 22:39-71

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

39 Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. 40 On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." 41 He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, 42 "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." 43 An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. 44 And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. - Luke 22:39-44

Meditation

Jesus' "garden" prayer, given its context, will always be one of the most gut-wrenching prayers we will ever read. Jesus told the disciples to pray that they would not fall into temptation while he went away and did the same. This cup in Jesus' prayer is often interpreted to symbolize his death, or the need for his death. I believe Jesus is making an offering to God, an offering of sacrifice, an offering of obedience, and asking his Father to receive his offering of death on behalf of all humanity. But, Jesus does not want to be outside of the will of his Father so he wants to be certain it is his Father's will that is guiding his spirit of sacrifice and obedience. The prayer then becomes one of absolute surrender to his Father's will that he would die for the sins of the people. Jesus knew his purpose for coming and this is possibly a prayer out of his humanity to release him from the crucifixion which is often how this is interpreted. Offerings historically were part of the great work of God for the sake of his people or in an individual's life on behalf of the nation. It would have been natural for Jesus to pause and live into his heritage and present an offering, the cup, as a sign of surrender and sacrifice for the purpose he was about to fulfill. What Jesus taught about his own character and displayed during the last week of his life, humility and servanthood, would lead to a natural act of offering to God. See the cup as Jesus offering his life for the service of the kingdom and with humility offering it to his Father at a most difficult time. To follow Christ in a spirit of humility, let's consider offerings of surrender and sacrifice of our life which would please our Father. When we do, and if needed, I'm confident God will send an angel to strengthen us to continue in our journey with him.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we bow before you today with gratitude of your Son as we read this difficult moment and hearing Jesus offer his life as a sacrificial offering to you. We are humbled by this act and pray that you will use us to fulfill your will in our life. We humbly offer a cup of offering to you and pray you will strengthen us for service in the kingdom. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 36 - Tuesday, March 31, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 23:1-25

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

22 For the third time he spoke to them: "Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him." 23 But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. 24 So Pilate decided to grant their demand. 25 He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will. - Luke 23:22-25

Meditation

Yesterday I wrote about the cup Jesus offered in the Garden of Gethsemane being an offering of surrender and sacrifice. Today we look at surrender from a different perspective. There is so much symbolism related to three or third involved in the story of Jesus' death and resurrection. At the same time, it is both exhilarating to see the scriptural story woven together this way and convicting to see the behavior of people. There is so much to this story I will only hit the high spots without many details. After being questioned by Pilate, sent off to Herod for questioning, and returned to Pilate for questioning again, Jesus remained innocent in the minds of both Pilate and Herod. In verse thirteen we learn Pilate called together the chief priests, Jewish spiritual leaders, the ruler, most likely political leaders, and then all the people of Jerusalem who wanted to participate in the discussion. Pilate wanted to set Jesus free, the collection of people Pilate called together insisted he die. Three times Pilate tried to convince all those gathered that there was no reason for Jesus to die. Three times they refused to listen, they shouted all the louder and demanded the release of a prisoner guilty of the worst crimes of their day. And Pilate surrendered to the will of the people and surrendered Jesus over to the people to die. Set aside what was going to happen and embrace the fact this whole scenario is part of the perfect will of God for our sake. But, be Pilate for a minute. Be part of the crowd for a minute. Pilate nor the crowd understood the perfect will of God. They acted out of a human understanding of the situation. Several things to take away. Don't be Pilate and surrender to the will of people for the sake of popularity or to get people to leave you alone. Surrendering to the will of the people when contrary to your understanding of what is right is usually detrimental to your relationship with Christ. Stand firm in what you believe is scripturally true. Don't be the people and try to eliminate out of your life what is spiritually or otherwise challenging. Jesus challenged everything about their life, spiritually, politically and practically. Don't surrender to the will of people and push Jesus to the background. On the other side, remember Barabbas experienced the mercy and grace of a loving Father like no other. He not only didn't get what he deserved, death, he was released from prison. That's mercy and grace at its best. There is lots to learn from this part of Jesus' story. Live in the power of the story.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, help us to hold strong in our beliefs around scriptural truth. Convict us long before we become dangerously close to surrendering to the will of people and pushing aside your will. We don't want to be a victim of three, we want to celebrate the goodness of three. We desire to embrace your will in every way. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day 37 - Wednesday, April 1, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 23:26-56

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

35 The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is God's Messiah, the Chosen One." 36 The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar 37 and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself." 38 There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. 39 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" - Luke 23:35-39

Meditation

We've made our way to the crucifixion. All the details, the suffering, the mocking, and ultimately Jesus breathes his last breath. No one mocking Jesus knew what they were asking. They kept throwing around this word save. Only moments earlier Jesus said the criminals who hung on each side of him didn't know what they were doing and asked the Father to forgive them. With the intent to insult they dared Jesus to save them. First the soldiers and then a criminal on the cross with Jesus. Save yourself. Save us. They didn't know what they were asking as they were only concerned about the last breath to be drawn. Yes, the King of the Jews could have done this but his reign as king had meaning much deeper than their present life. He was concerned about their place for eternity's sake. Not to say he was uninterested in the present reign of the kingdom, but this king came to save our souls and write our names in the Lamb's Book of Life. For Jesus knew if he didn't draw his last breath eternity was an impossibility because his last breath led to resurrection. This king, the King of the Jews came to save a people from eternal damnation, forever separated from the King. Yes, he was the king and he did save himself and save us. For eternity's sake. So many today are like the soldiers and the criminal and are short sighted. His kingdom will reign forever and people need to see beyond this present age. We need to help them.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, guide us to be your witnesses who have eternity in sight for those who are only wanting to be saved from physical death. Help us be people of faith who lead people to salvation from spiritual death. Let us live in such a way as to be examples of Christ followers who make a difference and become conduits to someone's relationship with your Son. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 24:1-12

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

5 . . . "Why do you look for the living among the dead? 6 He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 7 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' " 8 Then they remembered his words. - Luke 24:5-8

Meditation

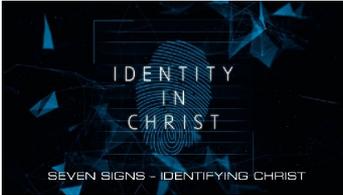
Our reading in Luke brings us to the glorious end a few days before we reach the Easter celebration. That's ok because tonight we will remember the words of Jesus when he told his disciples that he would be crucified and rise on the third day. Every time we participate in Holy Communion we remember those words as well as the words to do it in remembrance of what he has done. We want to remember because the words the women heard at the tomb are crucial. **He is not here; he has risen!** Those are seven very important words. One of the most difficult assignments I have as a pastor is to adequately convey the magnitude of importance of those words. "He has risen!" is the single most important concept of Christian faith. In fact, there would be no faith, there would be no one following Christ, if not for the resurrection. Most every principle of Christianity falls meaningless without the empty tomb. Christ leaving the tomb with resurrection power gives validity to every claim of Christianity. Every single thing you believe and practice as a Christian hinges on what we will celebrate in just a few days. Every single thing. When you experience hope or comfort or unconditional love or any other principle of the faith, it is all because of the resurrection. So, I will leave it at that and let you rejoice in the power of the resurrection as it applies to your life. You should be praising the Lord about now! Don't rush ahead to the resurrection but remember what the women heard, remember what Jesus told his disciples, and remember why we are who we are.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we simply pray that we can live in the joy and power and blessing of the resurrection. Forgive us when we fail to live as people of the resurrection. Make us mindful in our own way of the indescribable importance of Sunday. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Maundy Thursday Worship Service

Prayer Focus - A heart to sit at the table with Jesus.



Sermon Series:

"Seven Signs - Identifying Christ"

Sermon -

"Jesus Is Always at the Table" - John 11:32-44

How did you experience the presence of the Holy Spirit during worship?

What did you learn from the message today?

How does being at the table with Jesus change your life?

Sundays are often equated with Sabbath. Take a few minutes to:

Reflect - *on what you have learned from God's Word this week*

Reset - *worship with fellow sojourners*

Realign - *your mind, body and spirit*

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 24:13-35

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

28 As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. 29 But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. - Luke 24:28-31

Meditation

Over the last several years this has become one of my favorite stories of Jesus changing lives. It might be because it portrays how most people come to follow Him in our world today. We don't see water changed to wine or the lame walking and believe, we have our eyes opened and we see Jesus, really see, for the very first time. Jesus will change your life even when you don't know it is Jesus when our eyes are opened. His words are so compelling and transforming you will invite him to stay with you even when you don't know who you are inviting to stay. I love to read between the lines and let my imagination take over. I can't claim the "in between" as gospel truth but I can say it often helps explain human behavior. So, I imagine these two men on their way to Emmaus were, yes, being courteous and hospitable and welcomed Jesus to stay with them. But disguised by courtesy was their desire to continue to hear what this man had to say. Something was happening inside of them which was unexplainable. Fearing ridicule and rejection by friends when they admitted to the impact of Jesus' words, they simply did the right thing. There is never anything wrong with doing the right thing. But in doing what is right they continued to be in the presence of the resurrected One. Because of their willingness to be vulnerable the evening turned into a transformative experience for them, they recognized Jesus and began telling others what had happened. At times we need to read between the lines of our life and be willing to stay in the presence of God. It is in his presence that bread will be broken, literally or figuratively, and we will recognize Jesus in a brand new way. The old will be gone and the new will come. And we will tell.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, be present in our life and do something transformative in us today. Do not let us allow you to continue on to some other place but we pray that we will always invite you into our life. In the moment. In the now. Use our vulnerability to speak volumes of newness into us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Good Friday Worship Service

Prayer Focus - Your response to the cross.

Today's Sermon -

"A Day at the Cross" - John 19:30

How did you experience the presence of the Holy Spirit during worship?

What did you learn from the message today?

How will you live differently because Jesus finished his assignment?

Day 40 - Saturday, April 4, 2026

Today's Scripture Reading - Luke 24:36-53

Pray - God's wisdom about your identity and His favor.

Scripture

50 When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. 51 While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. 52 Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. 53 And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God. - Luke 24:50-53

Meditation

Jesus will change your life even when you don't know it is Jesus. The disciples didn't know. His words are so compelling and transforming you continue a conversation even when you don't know who you are seeing. Here are the disciples frightened out of their mind and they think they see a ghost. Jesus started a conversation and they joined right in until Jesus showed him his hands. There were still questions and they continued to be gracious hosts. And Jesus opened their minds so they could truly understand. Everything changed. Jesus pointed them to Jerusalem and the coming of the Holy Spirit where the story picks up in Acts. Something was happening inside of them which was unexplainable. They were overwhelmed but they knew something had happened. The disciples followed him to Bethany and they worshiped him and were filled with such joy. When they finally had their minds opened they recognized Jesus. The disciples probably began telling others their story. I'm thinking if they were continually in the temple praising God, they told a few people why. If they had joy flowing from their heart, they told a few people why. It is in his presence that our minds will be opened, literally or figuratively, and we will recognize Jesus in a brand new way. And we will tell. We are Easter people and we should cry it out loud. Or worship and live with great joy. Let's worship, be joyful, and continually praise Him. Let's act like a miracle has happened and the tomb is empty.

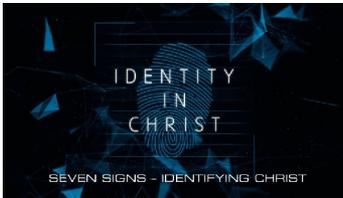
Prayer

Heavenly Father, as a disciple, a follower of Christ, we want to encounter Christ along our journey so that we respond like the first chosen Disciples. We pray for mind opening experiences that will change us forever. Lead us to a posture of continuous worship and joyful living. Let us live in a way that people see the empty tomb and resurrection power in all we do. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Sunday - April 5, 2026,

Easter Sunday

Prayer Focus - Your worship experience today.



Sermon Series:

“Seven Signs - Identifying Christ”

During the Sundays of Lent, I invite you to consider three questions. They will be the same each week, but will apply to the particular “Sign” or “Miracle” of Jesus from the Gospel of John the sermon focuses on.

Today's Sermon -

“The Greatest Sign: The Resurrection” - John 20:11-18

How did you experience the presence of the Holy Spirit during worship?

What did you learn from the message today?

How does the resurrection of Jesus change your life this year?

Sundays are often equated with Sabbath. Take a few minutes to:

Reflect - *on what you have learned from God's Word this week*

Reset - *worship with fellow sojourners*

Realign - *your mind, body and spirit*

Guide to Prayer and Fasting

Read Mark 9:14-32 and in particular verse 29:

29 He replied, "Some things will only happen as a result of prayer and fasting."

Ronnie Floyd:

To fast means to deny ourselves what is common, normal, and necessary, food, for a period of time so that our minds will become sharp, our hearts softened, and our spirits receptive to what God has to say to us. God promises to fill the void that the absence of food creates; He will pour out His blessings and satisfy us in a way that food neither can nor will. Without this intentional, heightened spiritual focus that comes from humbling ourselves in God's presence, we will be doomed to face the future timidly, defensively, without power, and without serious motivation. But when we have been in the presence of almighty God, and have taken our direction from His heart, we will have the wherewithal, the strength, the desire, the courage, and the confidence to face the future boldly, without fear, and without compromise.

Simply, fasting is denying the natural (desire for food) to focus on the spiritual (prayer, the Word) in order to welcome the supernatural presence of the Holy Spirit.

Types of Fasting found in Scripture:

I realize that fasting over the course of history has evolved to mean denial of anything we regularly participate in like food, TV, Facebook, an activity, etc. And I do not minimize the value of any of these. However, please understand that abstaining from food is the only type of fast that is mentioned in Scripture. The principle applies to all things but in Scripture it is only related to food. Therefore, for our discussion, the types of fasts I list are all related to food.

1. Absolute - no food or water, Jesus in the wilderness, Esther
2. Normal - no food, only water and juices, most common, Moses, Paul, many others
3. Partial - giving up some food and drinks for a specific time, Daniel 1 and 10

Length of common fasts found in Scripture: 1 day, 3 days, 21 days, 40 days, but others are found as well, 10 days, 14 days.

Remember, it's what God calls you and leads you to do.

3 Spiritual Principles I embrace without compromise:

1. God will call you to fast. If He doesn't, don't!
2. God will lead you to the type and length of fast.
3. God will give you specific reasons and purposes to fast.

Other spiritual principles I have found to be true:

1. There are no physical reasons to spiritually fast. (profound I know!)
2. Don't JUST skip meals. **Disconnect to Connect.** (scripture and prayer)
3. Seek humility, purity and holiness.
4. Only tell people within as wide a circle as necessary so you don't have to repeat the story.
5. God rarely honors selfishness, manipulation, piety and ungodly attitudes.
6. God often blesses honoring Him, humility, submission and repentance.
7. You must pray and seek the answers to the 3 Spiritual Principles above.

Practical advice:

1. Fasting without prayer and study is a diet. It will become incredibly difficult if you exclude the spiritual aspect of fasting.
2. Days 3-5 are the hardest. Pray hard and persevere. Headaches and stomach issues are common during this time.
3. Keep a journal. Write down your thoughts on God calling you to fast and then write the specific purposes of your fast. Record insights and answers as they come. This heightens the accountability.
4. On a normal fast, drink LOTS of water, natural/unsweetened fruit juices, vegetable juice, and sports drinks (Gatorade). Anything natural or not sweetened with sugar will be easier on your digestive system.
5. Don't be super pious, keep as much of your normal routine as possible, i.e. sit with your family at meals. You'll survive!
6. If you fast for an extended period of time, break the fast slowly. Think "easily digestible" for a day or two.
7. Pray often.

Three Important Questions

1. Has God called you to fast?
2. If so, for how long and what type of fast?
3. What are the purposes or reasons God has called you to fast?

Type and Length: _____

Purposes or Reasons:

Appreciation

Thank you for joining with me as we journeyed from the humility of Ash Wednesday to the cross and empty tomb. I trust this experience has been valuable to your spiritual life and your experience of the Lenten season. I am blessed to be able to share these simple yet profound truths with you each day. I pray your eyes were opened and your mind expanded to gain maybe one or two new insights about the Easter story and your identity in Christ. Most of all I am praying you experienced Christ in your heart afresh in a life-changing way.

Thank you to the wonderful congregation of Tuscumbia First Methodist Church and all those beyond who read and study God's word with me each day. It's a joy to mature in the faith together.

If you are new to the daily devotion that has guided us through Lent and would like to continue, I write them daily throughout the year. Simply email me requesting to join the devotion list and I will send it to you via email. The devotions are similar to what you have been reading, the difference being I write them new each morning. You can also read them on Facebook as I post them there as well. I write a devotion each morning, Monday through Friday (and some Saturdays).

It's always an honor to join you through the means of this written devotion. If this is your first time, I trust our paths will cross again one day.

Living the Lenten and Easter story together,



Alan Beasley
PASTOR

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