

# **STAYING WITH JESUS**

**A 40-Day Lenten Journey Through the 14 Stations of the Cross**

By Rev. Cynthia Cynthia

# Introduction

Lent is not a countdown to Easter.

It is a **journey of formation**.

This Lenten season, you are invited to walk intentionally through **the Stations of the Cross**, not as a historical reenactment, but as a **spiritual pilgrimage** that shapes the heart, confronts the soul, and deepens discipleship.

**Staying With Jesus** is designed to slow us down, fix our attention, and train us to remain present with Christ through suffering, obedience, endurance, surrender, and hope. Each station represents a moment on Jesus' path to Calvary, and each day invites you to examine how that same journey is unfolding in your own life.

This is not devotional reading for information.

This is **formational work** for transformation.

# About the Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross trace the final journey of Jesus from condemnation to burial. Historically practiced by the Church as a way to enter Christ's suffering, this journey has always been meant to be **participatory**, not passive.

In this packet, each station is expanded into **three days of focused formation**, allowing you to stay with each moment long enough for Scripture to do its work in you. The stations are not rushed. They are inhabited.

You will encounter themes such as

- false judgment
- obedience without outcome
- repeated struggle
- shared suffering
- exposure
- endurance
- grief
- waiting
- trust before resurrection

These are not abstract concepts. They are lived realities. Lent gives us space to face them honestly with Christ.

# **Outline** of the Lenten Journey

## *Stations and Daily Themes*

### **STATION 1 — Jesus Is Condemned to Death**

*Learning to stand in truth without vindication*

- **Day 1:** Facing False Judgment
- **Day 2:** Jesus' Silence
- **Day 3:** Trusting God's Verdict

### **STATION 2 — Jesus Takes Up the Cross**

*Accepting obedience without negotiation*

- **Day 4:** The Weight Assigned
- **Day 5:** Willing Obedience
- **Day 6:** Carrying with Intention

### **STATION 3 — Jesus Falls the First Time**

*Discovering strength within weakness*

- **Day 7:** The Shock of Weakness
- **Day 8:** Falling Without Quitting
- **Day 9:** Getting Up Again

### **STATION 4 — Jesus Meets His Mother**

*Learning the ministry of presence in suffering*

- **Day 10:** Shared Suffering
- **Day 11:** Grief in Relationship
- **Day 12:** Staying Present

### **STATION 5 — Simon of Cyrene Helps Carry the Cross**

*Receiving and offering help without shame*

- **Day 13:** Help You Didn't Request
- **Day 14:** Shared Burden
- **Day 15:** Community in Suffering

## **STATION 6 — An Act of Courageous Compassion**

*Choosing embodied love over safe distance*

- **Day 16:** Courageous Kindness
- **Day 17:** Small Acts, Holy Impact
- **Day 18:** Love Without Credit

## **STATION 7 — Jesus Falls the Second Time**

*Remaining faithful amid repetition and weariness*

- **Day 19:** Repeated Struggle
- **Day 20:** Perseverance Without Progress
- **Day 21:** Endurance

## **STATION 8 — Jesus Speaks to the Women of Jerusalem**

*Holding compassion and truth together*

- **Day 22:** Compassion in Pain
- **Day 23:** Truth Spoken in Love
- **Day 24:** Prophetic Care

## **STATION 9 — Jesus Falls the Third Time**

*Trusting God in exhaustion and depletion*

- **Day 25:** Exhaustion
- **Day 26:** Faith Without Energy
- **Day 27:** Being Carried Forward

## **STATION 10 — Jesus Is Stripped**

*Letting go of image, performance, and shame*

- **Day 28:** Exposure
- **Day 29:** Letting Go of Image
- **Day 30:** Trusting God with Shame

## **STATION 11 — Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross**

*Committing to obedience that cannot turn back*

- **Day 31:** No Turning Back

- **Day 32:** Pain with Purpose
- **Day 33:** Faithfulness Under Constraint

## **STATION 12 — Jesus Dies on the Cross**

*Learning to finish, release, and surrender*

- **Day 34:** Completion
- **Day 35:** Trusting God with the End
- **Day 36:** Letting Go

## **STATION 13 — Jesus Is Taken Down from the Cross**

*Honoring grief with reverence and care*

- **Day 37:** Grief Held with Care
- **Day 38:** Reverence in Sorrow

## **STATION 14 — Jesus Is Laid in the Tomb**

*Practicing holy waiting and quiet hope*

- **Day 39:** Holy Waiting
- **Day 40:** Trust Before Resurrection

# How to Use This Packet

Each day follows the same intentional rhythm:

- **Primary Scripture** anchors the day in the biblical narrative
- **Biblical Formation Lesson** provides theological grounding and clarity
- **Formational Practice** invites embodied obedience
- **If You Embraced This Truth...** helps you envision real-life transformation
- **Ownership Declaration** allows you to name and claim the work God is doing

This journey can be completed individually, but it is designed to be walked **in community**. Read slowly. Reflect honestly. Do not rush to finish. Let the Word confront, correct, comfort, and form you.

You do not need to “catch up” if you miss a day. Simply return and continue. Faithfulness matters more than perfection.

## Weekly Summary Reflections

Throughout the Lenten season, there will be **weekly summary reflections** led by me, **Overseer Cynthia McCants**. These reflections will help you:

- connect the stations to daily life
- process what God is revealing
- understand patterns of formation across the journey
- remain encouraged and anchored

These moments are meant to help you integrate the journey, not just complete it.

# The 40-Day Digital Gleaner

Alongside prayer, fasting, and reflection, Lent also invites **sacrificial generosity**.

This year, we are introducing a **40-Day Digital Gleaner**, inspired by the biblical practice of gleaning, giving consistently and quietly as an act of worship.

For many of us, this practice is familiar. As children in church, we carried physical gleaner cards during Lent, small, daily offerings that shaped discipline, consistency, and devotion. Those gleaners were never about the amount. They were about showing up daily with intention.

*The Digital Lenten Gleaner reclaims that same sacred rhythm.*

Each day, after engaging the devotion, you are invited to offer a simple, symbolic gift (\$1–\$10) based on the statement that best reflects your experience with God that day. Choose the amount that names a victory, a settled truth, or a decision already made in your heart.

Giving is voluntary, prayerful, and secondary to the spiritual work of this season.

This is not transactional giving, it is formational participation.

The heart of Lent is not the amount given, but the posture of the heart.

*\*Choose the amount that tells the truth about where you are today.\**

\$1 - I RETURNED

\$2 - I STOOD IN TRUTH

\$3 - I RECOMMITTED

\$4 - I RESET

\$5 - I ACCEPTED GRACE

\$6 - I STOPPED PRETENDING

\$7 - I TRUSTED THE PROCESS

\$8 - I CHOSE TO MOVE FORWARD

\$9 - HE'S DRYING MY TEARS

\$10 - I RECEIVED A BREAKTHROUGH

 *Just like physical gleaners, invite someone else to join in the devotion and complete a gleaner. All participants will be acknowledged.*

# An Invitation

Lent asks us a simple but costly question:

**Will you stay with Jesus?**

Not only at resurrection, but in silence.

Not only in victory, but in weakness.

Not only when answers are clear, but when waiting is required.

This journey through the Stations of the Cross is an invitation to remain, to walk slowly, and to be changed along the way.

Do not rush past the cross.

# Stay with Jesus!

# Stations

## STATION 1 — JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

### **Primary Scripture: Luke 23:13–25 (NLT)**

Pilate called together the leading priests and other religious leaders, along with the people, and announced his verdict. “You brought this man to me, accusing him of leading a revolt. I have examined him thoroughly on this point in your presence and find him innocent. Herod came to the same conclusion and sent him back to us. Nothing this man has done calls for the death penalty. So I will have him flogged, and then I will release him.” But the mob shouted louder and louder, demanding that Jesus be crucified, and their voices prevailed. So Pilate sentenced Jesus to die as they demanded.

### **Day 1 – Facing False Judgment**

#### **Scripture: Isaiah 53:7 (NLT)**

He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth.

#### **Biblical Formation Lesson:**

Jesus is condemned not because truth failed, but because power resisted truth. Scripture teaches that righteousness does not guarantee vindication in human systems. This day confronts the false belief that obedience always produces fairness. God’s justice is often delayed in public but never denied in heaven.

#### **Formational Practice:**

Notice where you feel misunderstood today. Do not correct it immediately. Sit with it before God.

#### **If You Embraced This Truth...**

If you embraced the reality that obedience does not guarantee fairness, you would stop confusing injustice with failure. You would no longer internalize false judgments or exhaust yourself trying to correct every misunderstanding. If others saw you living unshaken under false accusation, secure, steady, and faithful, it would unsettle the enemy’s strategy to distract you through offense and discouragement. Your calm endurance would testify that God’s verdict, not public opinion, governs your life.

#### **Ownership Declaration:**

God’s judgment defines me, not human opinion.

## Day 2 – Jesus’ Silence

### Scripture: 1 Peter 2:23 (NLT)

He did not retaliate when he was insulted, nor threaten revenge when he suffered. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly.

### Biblical Formation Lesson:

Silence is not weakness when God is judge. Jesus refuses to participate in self-salvation through explanation. Scripture reveals that some battles are forfeited not because they are unwinnable, but because God is fighting on another level. Silence here is trust, not passivity.

### Formational Practice:

Choose silence once where you normally defend yourself.

### If You Embraced This Truth...

If you embraced silence as trust rather than weakness, you would conserve spiritual energy instead of bleeding it through unnecessary defense. You would recognize when God is handling what you are tempted to manage. If others witnessed your restraint, it would disrupt the enemy’s attempt to bait you into self-protection instead of God-dependence. Your silence would become evidence of maturity, not defeat.

### Ownership Declaration:

I trust God to defend what I do not explain.

## Day 3 – Trusting God’s Verdict

### Scripture: Romans 8:33 (AMP)

Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies us, declaring us blameless and putting us in a right relationship with Himself.

### Biblical Formation Lesson:

Justification belongs to God alone. Lent corrects our dependence on external validation. When God declares righteousness, human accusation loses ultimate authority. This day reforms misplaced allegiance, moving us from public opinion to divine declaration.

### Formational Practice:

Speak aloud, God’s judgment matters more than human opinion.

### If You Embraced This Truth...

If you truly stood on God’s verdict over your life, you would stop rehearsing accusations, yours or anyone else’s. You would move with confidence that does not require approval. If people saw you operating from divine assurance rather than human affirmation, it would disarm critics and quiet internal fear. The enemy thrives on insecurity. Standing on God’s declaration shuts that access point entirely.

**Ownership Declaration:**

I am justified by God. I stand secure.

## STATION 2 — JESUS TAKES UP THE CROSS

### **Primary Scripture: John 19:16–17 (NLT)**

Then Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus away. Carrying the cross by himself, he went to the place called Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha.

### **Day 4 – The Weight Assigned**

#### **Scripture: Matthew 11:28–30 (NLT)**

Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.

#### **Biblical Formation Lesson:**

Not every burden is self-chosen, but every burden can be God-carried. Jesus does not negotiate the cross. He shoulders it. Scripture dismantles the myth that faithful people avoid heavy loads. Discipleship is not escape. It is endurance with God.

#### **Formational Practice:**

Name what you are carrying that you did not choose. Offer it honestly to God.

#### **If You Embraced This Truth...**

If you embraced that some weights are assigned, not chosen, you would stop resenting God for what He has trusted you to carry. You would exchange bitterness for endurance and frustration for grace. If others saw you carrying unavoidable burdens without complaint or collapse, it would silence the lie that hardship means abandonment.

#### **Ownership Declaration:**

God carries what I did not choose.

### **Day 5 – Willing Obedience**

#### **Scripture: Philippians 2:8 (NLT)**

He humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.

#### **Biblical Formation Lesson:**

Obedience is not measured by ease but by surrender. Jesus' obedience descends, not ascends. Lent confronts selective obedience, the kind that cooperates only when outcomes are favorable. Christ obeys unto death, redefining faithfulness.

#### **Formational Practice:**

Ask God for willingness where resistance lives.

#### **If You Embraced This Truth...**

If you embraced obedience without negotiating outcomes, your faith would deepen beyond convenience. You would stop asking God to explain Himself before you obey. If people observed

your willingness, especially when obedience costs you, they would witness authority rooted in surrender, not control.

**Ownership Declaration:**

I obey God without conditions.

**Day 6 – Carrying with Intention**

**Scripture: Galatians 6:2 (AMP)**

Carry one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ, the law of Christian love.

**Biblical Formation Lesson:**

Burden-bearing is communal, not isolating. Jesus models intentional carrying, not dragging resentment, but yielding purpose. This day reforms how we carry hardship, with clarity instead of complaint.

**Formational Practice:**

Adjust your posture, spiritually or physically. Carry today with awareness.

**If You Embraced This Truth...**

If you carried responsibility with intention instead of resentment, your posture would preach louder than your words. Others would see purpose where they expected bitterness. The enemy loses ground when burden does not harden the heart.

**Ownership Declaration:**

I carry this with purpose, not resentment.

## STATION 3 — JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME

### **Primary Scripture: Isaiah 53:4–5 (NLT)**

Yet it was our weaknesses he carried, it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins. But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.

### **Day 7 – The Shock of Weakness**

#### **Scripture: 2 Corinthians 12:9 (NLT)**

Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.”

#### **Biblical Formation Lesson:**

The fall reveals incarnation. Jesus’ weakness does not negate His divinity. It confirms His humanity. Scripture corrects triumphal theology that denies fragility. God’s power is displayed through dependence, not denial.

#### **Formational Practice:**

Acknowledge one weakness without apology.

#### **If You Embraced This Truth...**

If you embraced weakness as a place where God works, you would stop hiding and start healing. You would no longer confuse vulnerability with disqualification. The enemy’s grip weakens when shame loses its voice.

#### **Ownership Declaration:**

God’s power works through me, even here.

### **Day 8 – Falling Without Quitting**

#### **Scripture: Proverbs 24:16 (NLT)**

The godly may trip seven times, but they will get up again.

#### **Biblical Formation Lesson:**

Righteousness is not the absence of falling, but the refusal to remain down. Scripture reframes perseverance as persistence, not perfection. Lent trains believers to rise without shame.

#### **Formational Practice:**

Reject self-condemnation. Choose persistence.

#### **If You Embraced This Truth...**

If you embraced persistence over perfection, failure would lose its power to define you. You would rise without apology and continue without self-punishment. The enemy cannot paralyze someone who keeps getting up.

**Ownership Declaration:**

I get up again, and I keep going.

**Day 9 – Getting Up Again****Scripture: Micah 7:8 (NLT)**

Though I have fallen, I will rise. Though I sit in darkness, the Lord will be my light.

**Biblical Formation Lesson:**

Faith includes recovery. God does not despise the fallen. He strengthens the rising. This day confronts the lie that failure disqualifies calling.

**Formational Practice:**

Take one small step forward where you want to stop.

**If You Embraced This Truth...**

If you believed recovery is part of faith, you would stop quitting prematurely. You would learn to move forward even while healing. Steady rising dismantles the enemy's accusation against your future.

**Ownership Declaration:**

I rise, even from here.

## STATION 4 — JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

**Primary Scripture: John 19:25; Luke 2:34–35 (NLT)**

Standing near the cross were Jesus' mother, Mary, and his aunt, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. Simeon had said to Mary, "This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him. As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed, and a sword will pierce your very soul."

### Day 10 – Shared Suffering

**Scripture: Romans 12:15 (NLT)**

Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep.

**Biblical Formation Lesson:**

Love does not always rescue. It sometimes witnesses. Mary teaches us that faith includes standing present in pain we cannot fix. Scripture honors presence as ministry.

**Formational Practice:**

Sit with someone's pain without advice.

**If You Embraced This Truth...**

If you embraced presence as holy work, you would stop feeling inadequate when you cannot fix what hurts. You would understand that love is sometimes demonstrated by staying, not solving. Faithful presence weakens despair and silences the enemy's lie that usefulness equals control.

**Ownership Declaration:**

My presence is holy and enough.

### Day 11 – Grief in Relationship

**Scripture: Psalm 34:18 (NLT)**

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted. He rescues those whose spirits are crushed.

**Biblical Formation Lesson:**

God is near not only to the brokenhearted, but to those who love the brokenhearted. This day corrects the instinct to distance ourselves from grief because it feels uncomfortable or unproductive. Scripture teaches that proximity to pain is not a liability, it is a sacred assignment.

**Formational Practice:**

Name a grief you carry quietly. Acknowledge it without minimizing or spiritualizing it away.

**If You Embraced This Truth...**

If you embraced grief as something God draws near to, rather than something to avoid, you would stop rushing yourself and others toward premature healing. You would become safer,

more compassionate, and more grounded. If others saw you honoring grief instead of hiding from it, it would disrupt the enemy's attempt to isolate pain and turn it into bitterness.

**Ownership Declaration:**

I allow grief to be honored, not hidden.

**Day 12 – Staying Present**

**Scripture: Job 2:13 (NLT)**

Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was too great for words.

**Biblical Formation Lesson:**

Silence with the suffering is holy ground. Before Job's friends spoke wrongly, they ministered rightly by staying. Scripture teaches that presence often precedes healing. This day confronts the impulse to fix what God is still working through.

**Formational Practice:**

Offer presence instead of solutions today, even if it feels insufficient.

**If You Embraced This Truth...**

If you embraced presence as ministry, you would stop measuring usefulness by words or outcomes. You would trust that staying matters. If others experienced your steady presence without pressure or advice, it would weaken the enemy's lie that silence equals absence.

**Ownership Declaration:**

My presence is faithful and meaningful.

## STATION 5 — SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS CARRY THE CROSS

### Primary Scripture: Mark 15:21 (NLT)

A man named Simon, who was from Cyrene and was coming in from the countryside just then, was forced to carry Jesus' cross. Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus.

### Day 13 – Help You Didn't Request

#### Scripture: Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 (NLT)

Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble.

#### Biblical Formation Lesson:

God often sends help that disrupts pride. Simon did not volunteer, but his obedience became part of the redemptive story. This day confronts self-sufficiency masquerading as strength and reminds us that assistance is provision, not humiliation.

#### Formational Practice:

Receive help today without explaining, apologizing, or justifying your need.

#### If You Embraced This Truth...

If you embraced help as God's provision rather than a threat to your independence, you would stop carrying more than you were meant to. You would conserve strength for what matters most. If others saw you receive help with humility, it would undermine the enemy's attempt to isolate you through pride.

#### Ownership Declaration:

I receive help as God's provision.

### Day 14 – Shared Burden

#### Scripture: Romans 15:1 (NLT)

We who are strong must be considerate of those who are sensitive about things like this. We must not just please ourselves.

#### Biblical Formation Lesson:

Strength is not independence, it is responsibility. Scripture reframes strength as the capacity to carry others, not dominate them. This day dismantles hyper-spiritual self-sufficiency and restores communal faithfulness.

#### Formational Practice:

Carry something for someone else today without announcing it.

#### If You Embraced This Truth...

If you embraced shared burden as part of strength, you would stop resenting the weight of others'

needs. You would understand that maturity includes capacity. When others see you carry with grace rather than irritation, it exposes the enemy's lie that love must be convenient.

**Ownership Declaration:**

My strength makes room for others.

**Day 15 – Community in Suffering**

**Scripture: Hebrews 10:24–25 (NLT)**

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

**Biblical Formation Lesson:**

Discipleship is not solitary endurance. God forms us through shared faithfulness. Scripture insists that encouragement is not optional, it is essential for perseverance.

**Formational Practice:**

Acknowledge someone who has helped carry you, even briefly.

**If You Embraced This Truth...**

If you embraced community as essential rather than optional, you would stop trying to endure alone. You would lean into shared strength. The enemy loses ground when isolation is replaced by intentional connection.

**Ownership Declaration:**

I do not walk alone.

## STATION 6 — AN ACT OF COURAGEOUS COMPASSION

### **Primary Scripture: Matthew 25:40 (NLT)**

The King will say, “I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me.”

### **Day 16 – Courageous Kindness**

#### **Scripture: Matthew 25:40 (NLT)**

The King will say, “I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me.”

#### **Biblical Formation Lesson:**

As Jesus carries the cross, an unnamed act of compassion interrupts the brutality of the moment. Scripture repeatedly affirms that righteousness is often expressed through quiet, embodied mercy rather than public declaration. This day teaches that courageous kindness does not require recognition or approval. It requires presence, discernment, and the willingness to act when others retreat. Lent forms disciples who respond to suffering not with distance, but with holy interruption.

#### **Formational Practice:**

Act kindly today in a way that costs you comfort or convenience.

#### **If You Embraced This Truth...**

If you embraced courageous kindness as a way of life, you would stop waiting for permission to love well. Fear of visibility would no longer dictate your obedience. When others see you respond to suffering with compassion instead of avoidance, it disrupts the enemy’s reliance on apathy and fear. Love that moves when it is risky becomes a living witness.

#### **Ownership Declaration:**

I choose courageous compassion.

### **Day 17 – Small Acts, Holy Impact**

#### **Scripture: Zechariah 4:10 (NLT)**

Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin.

#### **Biblical Formation Lesson:**

God multiplies small faithfulness. Lent reforms our fixation on visibility and outcome. Scripture reminds us that heaven rejoices over beginnings, not just conclusions.

#### **Formational Practice:**

Do one quiet good deed without recognition.

#### **If You Embraced This Truth...**

If you embraced the power of small faithfulness, you would stop waiting for dramatic moments

to obey. You would trust God with what feels insignificant. The enemy loses leverage when obedience is consistent, not flashy.

**Ownership Declaration:**

Small faithfulness matters.

**Day 18 – Love Without Credit**

**Scripture: Matthew 6:3–4**

But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

**Biblical Formation Lesson:**

Hidden obedience retrains the heart away from validation and toward faithfulness. When love is practiced without acknowledgment, motive is purified. God's seeing becomes sufficient. Lent forms disciples who serve not for recognition, but from covenantal loyalty rooted in trust that God alone rewards rightly.

**Formational Practice:**

Release the need for acknowledgment.

**If You Embraced This Truth...**

You would no longer measure your faithfulness by response, affirmation, or visibility. You would give, serve, and love without scanning for reaction. Resentment would lose its grip because expectation would no longer govern obedience. You would experience quiet freedom, doing what is right simply because God sees, even when no one else ever does.

**Ownership Declaration:**

I choose obedience seen by God alone.

## **STATION 7 — JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME**

### **Primary Scripture: Lamentations 3:31–33**

For the Lord will not reject forever. Although he causes grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for he does not willingly afflict or grieve anyone.

### **Day 19 – Repeated Struggle**

#### **Scripture: Romans 7:15**

I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.

#### **Biblical Formation Lesson:**

Scripture refuses to shame recurring struggle. Instead, it exposes the reality of unfinished transformation. God's patience meets repetition with grace, not disgust. Lent trains believers to stop hiding cyclical weakness and to trust that sanctification unfolds through honest return, not perfected performance.

#### **Formational Practice:**

Name a recurring struggle honestly.

#### **If You Embraced This Truth...**

You would stop assuming that repetition means failure. Instead of hiding patterns you wish were resolved, you would bring them into God's presence without fear. Shame would loosen its hold, and honesty would replace self-contempt. You would learn perseverance, not by pretending progress, but by returning again and again to grace that has not withdrawn.

#### **Ownership Declaration:**

I bring my repeated struggle into God's light.

### **Day 20 – Perseverance Without Progress**

#### **Scripture: Galatians 6:9**

So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.

#### **Biblical Formation Lesson:**

Faithfulness is not validated by visible outcomes. Scripture affirms obedience that continues without confirmation. Lent retrains believers to detach obedience from evidence, forming endurance rooted in trust rather than results. God honors perseverance long before fruit becomes visible.

#### **Formational Practice:**

Continue one faithful act.

#### **If You Embraced This Truth...**

You would stop waiting for proof before continuing. You would resist the urge to quit simply

because nothing appears to change. Discouragement would lose its authority as obedience becomes its own act of worship. You would learn to trust that unseen faithfulness is shaping you, even when progress feels stalled or invisible.

**Ownership Declaration:**

I remain faithful without requiring results.

**Day 21 – Endurance**

**Scripture: Hebrews 12:11**

Now discipline always seems painful rather than pleasant at the time, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

**Biblical Formation Lesson:**

Discipline matures the soul before it comforts it. Growth often disrupts before it stabilizes. Scripture teaches that endurance forms righteousness slowly, through resistance and discomfort. Lent shapes believers to trust formation that does not feel good but is nonetheless producing lasting fruit.

**Formational Practice:**

Trust unseen formation.

**If You Embraced This Truth...**

You would stop rushing God toward relief. Instead of interpreting discomfort as failure, you would recognize it as formation. You would endure seasons that feel unproductive, trusting that growth often happens beneath the surface. Patience would deepen as you learned to remain steady without demanding immediate peace or clarity.

**Ownership Declaration:**

I trust God's work beneath discomfort.

## **STATION 8 — JESUS SPEAKS TO THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM**

### **Primary Scripture: Luke 23:27–31**

A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.”

### **Day 22 – Compassion in Pain**

#### **Scripture: Isaiah 42:3**

A bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice.

#### **Biblical Formation Lesson:**

Jesus demonstrates that suffering does not excuse emotional withdrawal. Even in pain, he remains attentive to others. Scripture teaches that compassion is not the absence of suffering but the refusal to let suffering collapse moral responsibility. Lent forms outward-facing faith amid inward strain.

#### **Formational Practice:**

Respond gently while weary.

#### **If You Embraced This Truth...**

You would resist letting pain turn inward into bitterness or isolation. Though weary, you would remain gentle and attentive. Compassion would become a discipline rather than a feeling. You would learn that suffering does not negate your capacity to care, and that God often works through your tenderness even while you are hurting.

#### **Ownership Declaration:**

I choose compassion even while hurting.

### **Day 23 – Truth Spoken in Love**

#### **Scripture: Ephesians 4:15**

But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.

#### **Biblical Formation Lesson:**

Truth and love are not competing virtues. Scripture insists they belong together. Love without truth distorts reality; truth without love inflicts harm. Christ models speech that is honest without being cruel, forming communities where growth occurs without wounding.

#### **Formational Practice:**

Speak truth gently.

**If You Embraced This Truth...**

You would stop choosing between honesty and kindness. Instead, your words would become measured, purposeful, and restorative. You would confront without contempt and listen without defensiveness. Relationships would deepen because truth would no longer be weaponized, and love would no longer be diluted to avoid discomfort.

**Ownership Declaration:**

I speak truth shaped by love.

**Day 24 – Prophetic Care****Scripture: Jeremiah 6:14**

They have treated the wound of my people carelessly, saying, “Peace, peace,” when there is no peace.

**Biblical Formation Lesson:**

False comfort postpones healing. Scripture condemns reassurance that avoids truth. Lent trains believers to offer care that is honest, not numbing. Prophetic care refuses to soothe wounds prematurely, trusting that truth, though painful, creates space for genuine restoration.

**Formational Practice:**

Refuse shallow reassurance.

**If You Embraced This Truth...**

You would stop rushing to make pain disappear. Instead of offering platitudes, you would honor the complexity of suffering. You would sit with discomfort rather than silence it. Care would become more courageous, grounded in truth that heals slowly but thoroughly, rather than comfort that merely masks the wound.

**Ownership Declaration:**

I offer care grounded in truth.

## STATION 9 — JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

### Primary Scripture: Psalm 88

O Lord, God of my salvation, when, at night, I cry out in your presence, let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry.

### Day 25 – Exhaustion

#### Scripture: Matthew 26:41

Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

#### Biblical Formation Lesson:

Scripture legitimizes exhaustion without spiritualizing it away. Weakness is named, not condemned. God does not demand strength when it is gone; he meets believers in depletion. Lent permits rest as obedience rather than failure.

#### Formational Practice:

Rest without guilt.

#### If You Embraced This Truth...

You would stop equating exhaustion with spiritual deficiency. Guilt would loosen as you recognized rest as faithful response. You would allow yourself to pause without self-reproach. Trust would deepen as you learned that God remains present even when productivity, motivation, and energy are depleted.

#### Ownership Declaration:

I allow rest without shame.

### Day 26 – Faith Without Energy

#### Scripture: Isaiah 40:29

He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless.

#### Biblical Formation Lesson:

Faith is not sustained by emotional vigor. Scripture defines faith as reliance, not stamina. When energy fades, dependence intensifies. Lent forms believers who trust God not because they feel strong, but because they know who sustains the powerless.

#### Formational Practice:

Pray briefly and sincerely.

#### If You Embraced This Truth...

You would stop waiting to feel energized before praying. Faith would become quieter, simpler, and more honest. You would release the pressure to perform spiritually and learn to rely on God

with minimal words and strength. Dependence would replace striving, and trust would deepen in weakness.

**Ownership Declaration:**

I rely on God beyond my strength.

**Day 27 – Being Carried Forward**

**Scripture: Deuteronomy 33:27**

The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

**Biblical Formation Lesson:**

There are moments when discipline is insufficient. Scripture assures that grace intervenes where effort collapses. God does not abandon believers when strength fails; he carries them. Lent teaches surrender, not as defeat, but as trust in sustaining mercy.

**Formational Practice:**

Lean on grace.

**If You Embraced This Truth...**

You would stop forcing progress. Instead of measuring yourself by momentum, you would allow God to support what you can no longer hold. Control would loosen, and humility would grow. You would learn that being carried is not weakness, it is evidence of grace actively at work.

**Ownership Declaration:**

I allow God to carry me.

## STATION 10 — JESUS IS STRIPPED

### **Primary Scripture: John 19:23–24**

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top.

### **Day 28 – Exposure**

#### **Scripture: Hebrews 4:13**

And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account.

#### **Biblical Formation Lesson:**

God’s knowledge is complete and unthreatened by exposure. Scripture teaches that being fully seen does not result in rejection but in redemptive truth. Lent removes spiritual performance, forming believers who stand honestly before God without disguise.

#### **Formational Practice:**

Release spiritual performance.

#### **If You Embraced This Truth...**

You would stop hiding behind appearances, language, or spiritual activity. Vulnerability would replace pretense. You would allow God to see what others never do, and trust that love remains unchanged. Freedom would emerge as you release performance and stand fully known, yet still held, by grace.

#### **Ownership Declaration:**

I stand fully known before God.

### **Day 29 – Letting Go of Image**

#### **Scripture: 1 Samuel 16:7**

But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord does not see as mortals see. They look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”

#### **Biblical Formation Lesson:**

God consistently prioritizes truth over presentation. Scripture exposes the inadequacy of image-driven faith and calls believers to integrity before God rather than credibility before others. Lent strips away curated spirituality and forms disciples who live honestly before the God who sees the heart, not the performance.

#### **Formational Practice:**

Refuse curated faith.

**If You Embraced This Truth...**

You would stop managing perception and start tending the heart. Spiritual activity would no longer serve as camouflage for insecurity. You would allow God to address who you are rather than who you appear to be. Freedom would emerge as you relinquished the burden of maintaining image and chose truth over approval.

**Ownership Declaration:**

I release image and choose truth before God.

**Day 30 – Trusting God with Shame****Scripture: Romans 8:1**

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

**Biblical Formation Lesson:**

Grace interrupts shame's authority. Scripture declares that condemnation no longer defines those who belong to Christ. Lent retrains the believer to release self-accusation and to trust God's verdict over internalized guilt. Shame loses power where grace is received rather than resisted.

**Formational Practice:**

Receive mercy freely.

**If You Embraced This Truth...**

You would stop rehearsing failures as identity. Shame would no longer dictate how you approach God or others. Instead of hiding, you would come openly, trusting grace to speak louder than memory. Freedom would grow as you learned to live from forgiveness rather than self-punishment.

**Ownership Declaration:**

I receive God's mercy without condemnation.

## **STATION 11 — JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS**

### **Primary Scripture: Luke 23:33**

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.

### **Day 31 – No Turning Back**

#### **Scripture: Luke 9:62**

Jesus said to him, “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”

#### **Biblical Formation Lesson:**

Some obedience is irreversible. Scripture teaches that following Christ includes moments where retreat is no longer faithful. Lent forms resolve that resists nostalgia and hesitation. Commitment deepens when obedience is embraced as costly, decisive, and forward-moving.

#### **Formational Practice:**

Stay committed.

#### **If You Embraced This Truth...**

You would stop negotiating with past versions of yourself. Doubt would no longer pull you backward once obedience is clear. You would accept the cost of faithfulness without longing for alternatives. Peace would emerge from settled commitment rather than constant reconsideration.

#### **Ownership Declaration:**

I move forward without turning back.

### **Day 32 – Pain with Purpose**

#### **Scripture: John 15:13**

No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

#### **Biblical Formation Lesson:**

Scripture reveals that suffering is not inherently redemptive, but sacrificial love is. Christ’s pain carries purpose because it is offered in love. Lent trains believers to entrust suffering to God, allowing love to shape pain rather than allowing pain to define the soul.

#### **Formational Practice:**

Offer pain to God.

#### **If You Embraced This Truth...**

You would stop treating pain as meaningless punishment. Instead, you would bring suffering into God’s presence, trusting Him to redeem what hurts. Purpose would begin to emerge not through explanation, but through surrender. Love would transform pain from burden into offering.

**Ownership Declaration:**

I offer my pain to God with trust.

**Day 33 – Faithfulness Under Constraint****Scripture: 1 Peter 4:19**

Therefore, let those suffering in accordance with God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator, while continuing to do good.

**Biblical Formation Lesson:**

God honors faithfulness practiced within limitation. Scripture affirms obedience that persists even when options are restricted. Lent shapes believers who remain faithful not because conditions are ideal, but because trust in God is greater than circumstance.

**Formational Practice:**

Remain faithful where stuck.

**If You Embraced This Truth...**

You would stop waiting for freedom before obedience. Limitation would no longer excuse disengagement. Instead, faithfulness would become intentional within constraint. Trust would deepen as you learned that God works powerfully even when movement feels restricted.

**Ownership Declaration:**

I remain faithful within limitation.

## STATION 12 — JESUS DIES

### Primary Scripture: John 19:28–30

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said, in order to fulfill the scripture, “I am thirsty.” A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, “It is finished.” Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

### Day 34 – Completion

#### Scripture: Ecclesiastes 7:8

Better is the end of a thing than its beginning. The patient in spirit are better than the proud in spirit.

#### Biblical Formation Lesson:

God finishes what He begins. Scripture affirms that completion is an act of faith, not merely endurance. Lent trains believers to honor follow-through, recognizing that obedience reaches maturity when it is carried through to its appointed end.

#### Formational Practice:

Complete one obedience.

#### If You Embraced This Truth...

You would resist the temptation to abandon what God assigned. Patience would replace impatience. You would value completion over novelty and endurance over excitement. Faith would mature as you honored God not only in starting, but in finishing well.

#### Ownership Declaration:

I complete what God has entrusted to me.

### Day 35 – Trusting God with the End

#### Scripture: Psalm 31:5

Into your hand I commit my spirit. You have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God.

#### Biblical Formation Lesson:

Surrender is not defeat but trust. Scripture teaches that releasing control at the end is an act of confidence in God’s faithfulness. Lent forms believers who entrust outcomes to God, trusting Him beyond their final effort.

#### Formational Practice:

Release outcomes.

#### If You Embraced This Truth...

You would stop clinging to control when obedience has been completed. Anxiety about results

would loosen its grip. Peace would grow as you trusted God with what follows your faithfulness. Rest would replace striving as you placed the ending fully in God's hands.

**Ownership Declaration:**

I trust God with every ending.

**Day 36 – Letting Go**

**Scripture: Philippians 3:13**

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do, forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead.

**Biblical Formation Lesson:**

Faith includes release. Spiritual maturity is not measured only by what we believe or pursue, but by what we are willing to relinquish when God signals that a season has ended. Paul's language is intentional. He does not deny his past, but he refuses to allow it to dictate his obedience. Letting go is not emotional detachment, it is covenantal alignment. When attachment outlives assignment, it becomes a weight rather than a witness. God often requires release not because the past was sinful, but because it is no longer sustaining future faithfulness.

**Formational Practice:**

Surrender attachment.

**If You Embraced This Truth...**

If you embraced this truth, you would stop rehearsing former victories or failures as proof of who you are now. You would recognize that clinging to what once worked can quietly hinder what God is currently doing. Letting go would no longer feel like betrayal of your story, but cooperation with God's ongoing work. You would experience freedom from the pressure to preserve old identities and instead trust that God's purposes continue unfolding ahead of you. Release would become an act of worship rather than loss.

**Ownership Declaration:**

I release what is behind me and trust God with what is ahead.

## STATION 13 — JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

### **Primary Scripture: John 19:38–40**

Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy five pounds. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs.

### **Day 37 – Grief Held with Care**

#### **Scripture: Isaiah 61:3**

To bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.

#### **Biblical Formation Lesson:**

God honors grief. Scripture does not rush the removal of Jesus from the cross. The careful handling of His body reveals that love expresses itself through reverence, even in loss. God does not treat grief as weakness or spiritual failure. Mourning is acknowledged as a sacred response to what mattered deeply. Before joy is appointed, ashes are recognized. God does not erase sorrow, He meets us within it and dignifies it with His presence.

#### **Formational Practice:**

Honor sorrow.

#### **If You Embraced This Truth...**

If you embraced this truth, you would stop apologizing for your grief or minimizing its weight. You would allow yourself to mourn without rushing toward resolution or explanation. Instead of viewing sorrow as something to overcome quickly, you would recognize it as a space where God draws near. You would treat your pain with the same care Joseph and Nicodemus showed Jesus' body, gently, deliberately, and without shame. Grief would become a place of encounter, not isolation.

#### **Ownership Declaration:**

I allow God to meet me in my grief and honor what has been lost.

### **Day 38 – Reverence in Sorrow**

#### **Scripture: Ecclesiastes 3:4**

A time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance.

#### **Biblical Formation Lesson:**

Loss is sacred. Scripture frames death and grief not as meaningless interruptions, but as moments held with gravity before God. What feels unbearable to us is never dismissed by Him. Reverence

in sorrow recognizes that grief deserves care, not critique. Faith does not rush pain toward resolution, nor does it demand emotional efficiency. God's nearness is often most profound when language fails and silence remains. Treating grief gently is an act of trust that God honors what mattered deeply.

**Formational Practice:**

Treat grief gently.

**If You Embraced This Truth...**

If you embraced this truth, you would stop pressuring yourself to grieve correctly or quickly. You would allow sorrow the dignity of time and tenderness. Instead of spiritualizing pain away, you would acknowledge that loss leaves real wounds that deserve care. You would speak to yourself with compassion rather than judgment and trust that God is not disappointed by your tears. Grief would become a sacred space where healing unfolds gradually, not a problem to solve.

**Ownership Declaration:**

I honor my grief as sacred and trust God to meet me there.

## STATION 14 — JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

### **Primary Scripture: Matthew 27:57–61**

As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.

### **Day 39 – Holy Waiting**

#### **Scripture: Psalm 130:5**

I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in His word I put my hope.

#### **Biblical Formation Lesson:**

Waiting is faith's discipline. The tomb represents a space where promises feel suspended and answers remain hidden. Nothing appears to be happening, yet faith is still being formed. Holy waiting does not demand explanations or timelines. It rests in God's character when outcomes are unclear. This kind of waiting resists despair without requiring certainty. God's work often continues unseen, shaping endurance, trust, and quiet hope.

#### **Formational Practice:**

Wait without answers.

#### **If You Embraced This Truth...**

If you embraced this truth, you would stop interpreting silence as abandonment. You would recognize that waiting does not mean God is absent, but that He is working beyond your visibility. You would release the need to control outcomes and allow God's timing to remain His own. Rather than filling the silence with anxiety, you would learn to remain present, trusting that what feels empty is often preparation. Waiting would become an act of faith, not frustration.

#### **Ownership Declaration:**

I choose to wait in trust, even when I do not understand.

### **Day 40 – Trust Before Resurrection**

#### **Scripture: Romans 8:24**

For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have?

#### **Biblical Formation Lesson:**

Hope precedes evidence. Before resurrection is revealed, trust must already be present. Scripture teaches that faith is not built on visible proof but on confidence in God's mercy. Even in grief, God's compassion remains active. Trust before resurrection resists despair without demanding

immediate relief. It believes that God's love is constant, even when circumstances suggest otherwise. This hope is quiet, steady, and deeply formed.

**Formational Practice:**

Hold hope quietly.

**If You Embraced This Truth...**

If you embraced this truth, you would stop waiting for proof before believing God is faithful. You would learn to trust His compassion even when restoration has not yet appeared. Hope would no longer be loud or performative, but settled and resilient. You would remain anchored in God's character rather than visible outcomes. Trust would shape how you endure uncertainty, allowing you to remain steady until resurrection reveals what faith already knew.

**Ownership Declaration:**

I trust God's compassion and hold hope before I see the outcome.

# **A Closing Word**

## **As Lent Concludes**

You stayed.

You walked with Jesus through suffering without rushing toward answers. You learned that faith is not proven by speed, strength, or certainty, but by presence. By obedience that continues when nothing feels resolved. By trust that remains when the way forward is quiet.

This journey was not about perfection or performance. It was about formation. Something has settled in you. Something has shifted. And even if you cannot yet name it, it will show itself in how you carry life, how you endure pressure, and how you wait with hope.

Lent ends, but what God has formed does not disappear. Stay with Jesus beyond this season. Stay with Him in faithfulness, in restraint, in courage, and in trust.

Resurrection is coming.  
And you are prepared to recognize it.

## **Final Declaration**

I stayed with Jesus.  
I have been formed.  
I walk forward changed.

# -PS.....Resurrection Sunday

## From Staying to Rising

Lent has taught you how to stay.  
Resurrection teaches you how to rise.

You did not rush here. You walked through silence, surrender, waiting, and trust before you arrived at this morning. That matters. Resurrection is not a reset that erases the journey. It is the fulfillment of a faith that learned how to remain when outcomes were not visible.

The resurrection of Jesus is not God undoing suffering. It is God **redeeming faithfulness within it.**

The same Jesus who was condemned, burdened, wounded, stripped, and placed in the tomb is the One who now rises. He does not rise as someone untouched by pain. He rises as One who has passed through it fully and faithfully.

And so do you.

Resurrection does not ask you to forget what you learned in Lent. It asks you to **carry it forward.**

Carry the patience you learned while waiting.  
Carry the courage you practiced without recognition.  
Carry the trust you built when answers were delayed.  
Carry the obedience you chose without applause.

Resurrection life is not loud at first. It is steady. It is grounded. It is recognizable by peace rather than spectacle.

Today, we do not celebrate escape.  
We celebrate **transformation.**

Because you stayed, you can now rise differently.

## A Resurrection Declaration

I rise without forgetting.  
I rise formed, not rushed.  
I rise carrying what God shaped in me.  
I rise with Jesus.



**Rev. Cynthia McCants** is a preacher, teacher, and faith leader committed to building believers in spiritual maturity through the faithful teaching of God’s Word. She serves as Senior Pastor of New Gethsemane Baptist Church in Long Island, New York, and is the convener of *Ignite Your Day in the Word*, a national devotional community and annual conference.

With a background in global finance and decades of ministry leadership, Rev. McCants brings theological depth, pastoral clarity, and real-world application to every teaching. She is a Doctor of Ministry candidate at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, focusing on prophetic preaching, and holds a Master of Arts in Biblical Exposition.

Her ministry is rooted in the conviction that the Word of God still transforms lives—one verse at a time.