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With Jesus In the Wilderness

A Scripture and
Reflection Guide for Lent



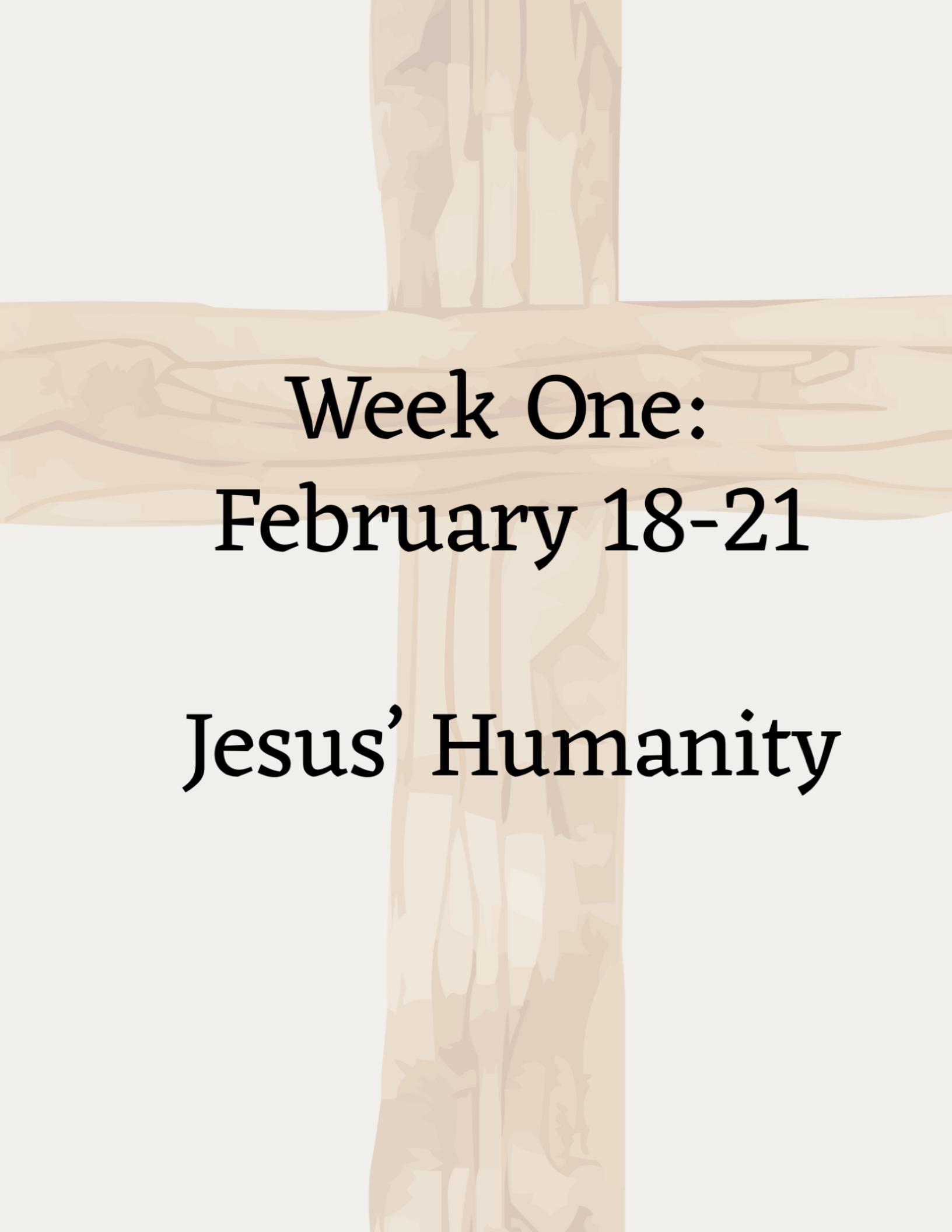
In Matthew 4, Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness to prepare for his formal season of ministry on earth. John the Baptist had just revealed Him to be the Messiah, but before he began his three years of ministry, he took intentional time to prepare for the work ahead of him by fasting and praying alone with the Father. It was this time in the wilderness that prepared Jesus to resist the temptations of Satan and to spread the hope of His Kingdom as he ministered to the masses.

These 40 days of stillness and solitude can seem odd at first glance. Why did Jesus spend so much time alone with the Father when He could have gone forward with His ministry right away? How could he waste time alone in a desert when the world needed him desperately? We live in a world of hustle and immediate results, and slow, quiet preparation is discouraged because we want to see the finished product without the work to go along with it. Yet, Jesus showed us through his example (both during this time in the wilderness and repeatedly throughout his ministry) that moments of stillness and time spent in prayer are actually the most important steps we can take towards intimacy with God.

The church practices the season of Lent to imitate Christ's example in the wilderness—to spend 40 days in intentional fasting and prayer in order to draw near to the Father and listen to His Spirit. This is a time for reflection, for stillness, and for the church as a whole to remember our weakness and turn to God for strength. The Lent season begins on Ash Wednesday (February 18) and ends on Maundy Thursday (April 2).

In this guide, I hope to offer a space for you to meditate on Scripture in a special way so that you can find encouragement and remember the hope that we have in Christ. My goal is to offer a simple tool that you can use as God guides your heart and mind over the next 40 days. Each week will have a theme which will guide our hearts to prepare for the celebration of Easter. You will find a passage to read each day and some questions to ponder as you think through the Scripture.

Our world is heavy, but God offers hope. Take time during this Lent season to follow Jesus' example in the wilderness, to slow down and to spend intentional time with the Father, for it is through filling our own cups with His Word that we will be able to impact the world around us with His love.



Week One:
February 18-21

Jesus' Humanity

Wednesday February 18: Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. Then the tempter approached him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

He answered, “It is written: Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

Then the devil took him to the holy city, had him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written:

He will give his angels orders concerning you,
and they will support you with their hands
so that you will not strike
your foot against a stone.”

Jesus told him, “It is also written: Do not test the Lord your God.”

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. And he said to him, “I will give you all these things if you will fall down and worship me.”

Then Jesus told him, “Go away, Satan! For it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.”

Then the devil left him, and angels came and began to serve him.

Reflection Questions:

- What does this passage reveal about the way Satan works to tempt us?
- How did Jesus respond to Satan’s temptations? How can we imitate his response when we are also tempted?
- Why do you think Jesus’ 40 days in the wilderness prepared him to overcome the temptations from Satan without sinning? What does this teach us about how we should prepare for our own times of temptation?

Thursday February 19: Hebrews 4:14-16

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens—Jesus the Son of God—let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin. Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need.

In yesterday's passage we read about Jesus' temptation, and these verses in Hebrews tell us why Jesus' temptation was so important. Because Jesus experienced temptations just like we do, when we pray to Him for help, we know that He understands our circumstances from experience. He has been in our place, been tempted in the same way, but he did it without sinning! Though he was human like us, Jesus never sinned. Our Savior overcame sin, and He helps us to do the same.

Reflection Questions:

- What does this passage reveal about the way Satan works to tempt us?
- How did Jesus respond to Satan's temptations? How can we imitate his response when we are also tempted?
- Why do you think Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness prepared him to overcome the temptations from Satan without sinning? What does this teach us about how we should prepare for our own times of temptation?

Friday February 20: Colossians 1:15-20

He is the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn over all creation.
For everything was created by him,
in heaven and on earth,
the visible and the invisible,
whether thrones or dominions
or rulers or authorities—
all things have been created through him and for him.
He is before all things,
and by him all things hold together.
He is also the head of the body, the church;
he is the beginning,
the firstborn from the dead,
so that he might come to have
first place in everything.
For God was pleased to have
all his fullness dwell in him,
and through him to reconcile
everything to himself,
whether things on earth or things in heaven,
by making peace
through his blood, shed on the cross.

After encouraging the church in Colossae, reminding them that they have been rescued from darkness and given strength through their faith in Jesus, Paul writes this poem to describe Jesus and what he accomplished. When Jesus took on flesh, he revealed the fullness of God to us and has reconciled us to God through his death and resurrection on the cross. Jesus is not only a human, but he is the Son of God who has always existed and who is glorified above all others.

Reflection Questions:

- What does it mean that Jesus is the image of the invisible God?
- Why is it important to remember that Jesus is the head of the church?
- In these verses, what do we learn about Jesus' involvement in creation?

Saturday February 21: Philippians 2:5-11

Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus,

who, existing in the form of God,
did not consider equality with God
as something to be exploited.

Instead he emptied himself
by assuming the form of a servant,
taking on the likeness of humanity.

And when he had come as a man,
he humbled himself by becoming obedient
to the point of death—
even to death on a cross.

For this reason God highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee will bow—
in heaven and on earth
and under the earth—
and every tongue will confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Reflection Questions:

- What is the attitude of Christ that we should adopt?
- Why is it important to know that Jesus, the One we worship, is humble?
- How does it make you feel to know that one day every knee in heaven and on earth will bow down to Jesus?



Week Two:
February 22-28

**Prophecies about
Jesus**

Sunday February 22: Your Local Church

As you attend church today, spend intentional time seeking the Lord among other believers. You are welcome to use the questions below to help you think through how God moved within your church today.

- Who in your church family encouraged you today?
- Did a specific song move your heart? Why?
- What was the focus in this pastor's sermon? Did anything specific stick out to you as you listened?
- How are you going to implement what you heard and felt at church into your upcoming week?



Monday February 23: Isaiah 53:4-11

Yet he himself bore our sicknesses,
and he carried our pains;
but we in turn regarded him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.

But he was pierced because of our rebellion,
crushed because of our iniquities;
punishment for our peace was on him,
and we are healed by his wounds.

We all went astray like sheep;
we all have turned to our own way;
and the Lord has punished him
for the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth.

Like a lamb led to the slaughter
and like a sheep silent before her shearers,
he did not open his mouth.

He was taken away because of oppression and judgment,
and who considered his fate?

For he was cut off from the land of the living;
he was struck because of my people's rebellion.

He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
but he was with a rich man at his death,
because he had done no violence
and had not spoken deceitfully.

Yet the Lord was pleased to crush him severely.

When you make him a guilt offering,
he will see his seed, he will prolong his days,
and by his hand, the Lord's pleasure will be accomplished.

After his anguish,
he will see light and be satisfied.

By his knowledge,
my righteous servant will justify many,
and he will carry their iniquities.

Reflection Questions:

- This prophecy describes Jesus' crucifixion. What did Jesus experience for us?
- Did Jesus do anything himself to deserve punishment?
- How does it make you feel to know that Jesus went through this pain for our sake?

Tuesday February 24: Isaiah 9:2-7

The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
a light has dawned
on those living in the land of darkness.

You have enlarged the nation
and increased its joy.

The people have rejoiced before you
as they rejoice at harvest time
and as they rejoice when dividing spoils.

For you have shattered their oppressive yoke
and the rod on their shoulders,
the staff of their oppressor,
just as you did on the day of Midian.

For every trampling boot of battle
and the bloodied garments of war
will be burned as fuel for the fire.

For a child will be born for us,
a son will be given to us,
and the government will be on his shoulders.

He will be named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

The dominion will be vast,
and its prosperity will never end.

He will reign on the throne of David
and over his kingdom,
to establish and sustain it
with justice and righteousness from now on and forever.

The zeal of the Lord of Armies will accomplish this.

Yesterday's passage was a prophecy about Jesus' death, and this one is fortelling Jesus' birth. Jesus came as a child and his incarnation brought light when the world seems full of nothing but darkness. Jesus' birth brought joy, showing God's faithfulness to redeem his people and keep his promises.

Reflection Questions:

- Why does Jesus' birth give us hope?
- How do you see the light of God even when darkness seems to have taken over?
- What are the four names given to Jesus in this passage?

Wednesday February 25: Genesis 3:15, 4:25

I will put hostility between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring.

He will strike your head,
and you will strike his heel.

Adam was intimate with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth, for she said,
“God has given me another offspring in place of Abel, since Cain killed him.”

Genesis 3 gives the story of the Fall of man, when Adam and Eve chose to disobey God and to listen to the serpent. In a moment of doubt and selfishness, they ate a fruit that falsely promised them power and instead found themselves in shame, regretting their rebellion against their Creator. Because of their sin, the man and woman were driven out of God’s presence in the Garden of Eden, but God did not leave them without hope. In verse 15, God gives the first promise of a Redeemer, one who would come and restore their perfect relationship with Him. This Messiah would come from the offspring of the woman and crush the head of the serpent, defeating sin and darkness once and for all.

Eve held onto this hope for a Messiah even as she gave birth to her sons. When she named her third son, Seth, she remembered God’s promise to provide salvation through her offspring. Seth’s name means “anointed one,” showing that Eve believed God would bring the redeemer through her offspring. She did not know whether Seth would be the Messiah or not, but she did know that God was faithful to His promise. Now, we know that Jesus was the promised seed of the woman and that he did, indeed, crush the serpent’s head.

Reflection Questions:

- How does it encourage you to know that God had a plan for the redemption of humanity from the moment they fell into sin?
- In what ways does Jesus fulfill this prophecy from Genesis 3?
- Why does this prophecy of the future Messiah give us hope today as it did for Eve?

Thursday February 26: Numbers 21:4-9

Then they set out from Mount Hor by way of the Red Sea to bypass the land of Edom, but the people became impatient because of the journey. The people spoke against God and Moses: "Why have you led us up from Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread or water, and we detest this wretched food!" Then the Lord sent poisonous snakes among the people, and they bit them so that many Israelites died.

The people then came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you. Intercede with the Lord so that he will take the snakes away from us." And Moses interceded for the people.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Make a snake image and mount it on a pole. When anyone who is bitten looks at it, he will recover." So Moses made a bronze snake and mounted it on a pole. Whenever someone was bitten, and he looked at the bronze snake, he recovered.

During their wilderness wandering, the Israelites encountered poisonous snakes because they complained about Moses' leadership and rejected God. They repented, but in order to find salvation from the snakes, God told them to look up at a bronze snake that Moses fashioned onto a pole. They had to recognize their mistake and look to God for salvation, trusting Him to heal them.

This passage is a prophecy about Jesus because the bronze snake pointed to someone who would come in the future who would bring them salvation. However, this Messiah would come to save them from a problem much greater than snakes. This Messiah would come to bring salvation from sin.

Reflection Questions:

- Why did God send the snakes?
- Who did the Israelites turn to for help from the snakes? How did they react to the snakes?
- Why do you think it is significant that in order for the Israelites to be saved from the snakes, they had to look upward?"

Friday February 27: John 3:14-18

“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Anyone who believes in him is not condemned, but anyone who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God.

In this passage, Jesus is speaking to Nicodemus, a Pharisee, to answer the question, “what does it mean to be born again?” Jesus used the example of Moses holding up the snake in the wilderness (that you read yesterday) to answer the question. Jesus explained to Nicodemus that a story he knew from the Old Testament was actually a prophecy about Himself.

Through this explanation, Jesus declared himself to be the Son of God who will save those who look to him. When Moses lifted the snake, he was foreshadowing the Messiah who would come to save the people from sin. Jesus brought salvation for Nicodemus, and he saves you and me too! Just as the Israelites looked to the bronze snake for salvation from the serpents, so you and I can look to Jesus for salvation from our sins.

Reflection Questions:

- Why do you think Jesus used this Old Testament story to explain to Nicodemus what it means to be born again?
- What does Jesus teach in these verses? What does it mean to be born again?
- Are you born again?

Saturday February 28: Revelation 1:4-8

John: To the seven churches in Asia. Grace and peace to you from the one who is, who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and has set us free from our sins by his blood, and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father—to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Look, he is coming with the clouds,
and every eye will see him,
even those who pierced him.
And all the tribes of the earth
will mourn over him.
So it is to be. Amen.

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “the one who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

The book of Revelation is a letter depicting a vision which God gave to the Apostle John. In this vision, God revealed future events and gave John a glimpse into Jesus Christ's second coming. John wrote this introduction to his letter to describe Jesus' glorious appearance and sure victory over sin.

Reflection Questions:

- What does this prophecy teach us about Jesus?
- Why is it important to know that Jesus' second coming will be public and glorious? How is this different than his first coming?
- What does it mean that Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega?



Week Three: March 1-7

Adoration and Amazement

Sunday March 1: Your Local Church

As you attend church today, spend intentional time seeking the Lord among other believers. You are welcome to use the questions below to help you think through how God moved within your church today.

- Who in your church family encouraged you today?
- Did a specific song move your heart? Why?
- What was the focus in this pastor's sermon? Did anything specific stick out to you as you listened?
- How are you going to implement what you heard and felt at church into your upcoming week?



Monday March 2: Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd;
I have what I need.

He lets me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside quiet waters.
He renews my life;
he leads me along the right paths
for his name's sake.

Even when I go through the darkest valley,
I fear no danger,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

Only goodness and faithful love will pursue me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
as long as I live.

Reflection Questions:

- What does it mean that the Lord is your shepherd?
- How does God's presence with us in the darkest valley give comfort?
- When David wrote this psalm, he was fleeing the palace after his son Absalom rebelled against him. How does this context give insight into this psalm and David's ability to write these words amid such troublesome circumstances?

Tuesday March 3: Psalm 117

Praise the Lord, all nations!
Glorify him, all peoples!
For his faithful love to us is great;
the Lord's faithfulness endures forever.
Hallelujah!

Right in the middle of the Bible, Psalm 117 declares God's heart for the nations. We often think of passages like Matthew 28:18-20 or Acts 1:8 as the primary verses to describe God's mission but, in reality, His desire for the whole world and all peoples to know him is dispersed throughout Scripture. All nations, all peoples, will glorify God and experience his faithful love!

Reflection Questions:

- Why is it important to understand that God's heart is for all peoples and nations to know him?
- Who in your life needs to know God so they can praise and glorify him? How can you share the love of Christ with them in this season of Lent, maybe even today?
- How have you personally seen God's faithful love in your own life?

Wednesday March 4: Isaiah 6:1-8

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphim were standing above him; they each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another:

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Armies;
his glory fills the whole earth.

The foundations of the doorways shook at the sound of their voices, and the temple was filled with smoke.

Then I said:

Woe is me for I am ruined
because I am a man of unclean lips
and live among a people of unclean lips,
and because my eyes have seen the King,
the Lord of Armies.

Then one of the seraphim flew to me, and in his hand was a glowing coal that he had taken from the altar with tongs. He touched my mouth with it and said:

Now that this has touched your lips,
your iniquity is removed
and your sin is atoned for.

Then I heard the voice of the Lord asking:

Who will I send?
Who will go for us?
I said:

Here I am. Send me.

In this passage, Isaiah sees the Lord and receives his mission. As he encounters the Lord in His temple, he recognizes his own unworthiness and acknowledges the majesty and holiness of God. God forgives Isaiah's sins and calls him to go forth and speak His Words as a prophet to the people of Israel.

Reflection Questions:

- Have you ever thought about the majesty and holiness of God? What comes to your mind?
- How does Isaiah's response to God offer an example of how we are supposed to respond when we encounter God?
- When have you sensed God calling you to obey him in a particular circumstance? How did you respond?

Thursday March 5: Romans 11:33-36

Oh, the depth of the riches
and the wisdom and the knowledge of God!
How unsearchable his judgments
and untraceable his ways!
For who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?
And who has ever given to God,
that he should be repaid?
For from him and through him
and to him are all things.
To him be the glory forever. Amen.

In the middle of the book of Romans, Paul's great explanation of the gospel and salvation, Paul is so moved by the work of Christ that he writes this hymn of praise. God's mercy is so great and his salvation is so good that worship should be our immediate response. God's wisdom and knowledge is unfathomable to us, for he knows all things and works everything out for the good of his people. God sustains everything and deserves only glory and honor for his graciousness to us.

Reflection Questions:

- Are there limits to our knowledge and wisdom? How does it feel to know that God's wisdom is unlimited?
- What does it mean that God does not need to repay anyone? Is it possible for God to "owe" us something?
- How can you give God glory for your salvation today?

Friday March 6: Lamentations 3:19-24

† Zayin

Remember my affliction and my homelessness,
the wormwood and the poison.
I continually remember them
and have become depressed.
Yet I call this to mind,
and therefore I have hope:

¶ Cheth

Because of the Lord's faithful love
we do not perish,
for his mercies never end.
They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness!
I say, "The Lord is my portion,
therefore I will put my hope in him."

The prophet Jeremiah, the author of Lamentations, is known as the weeping prophet, and his writing certainly fits that description well. He prophesied in Judah during the time of their exile to Babylon—a dark time in Judah's history. They were displaced and humiliated because of their sins, and the poem of Lamentations describes the despair of the peoples' hearts. But towards the end of the poem, Jeremiah remembers that his hope comes from the Lord, who offers faithful love and new mercies every morning. Just as David declared in Psalm 23, Jeremiah knew that the Lord would be with them in their dark valley and that his faithful love would sustain them through each day.

Reflection Questions:

- Have you ever found yourself in a seemingly hopeless situation? How has your hope in God helped you in the past?
- Why is it important for us to know that even the prophets of the Bible experienced despair in their circumstances?
- What does it mean that "the Lord is my portion?"

Saturday March 7: Philippians 4:4-8

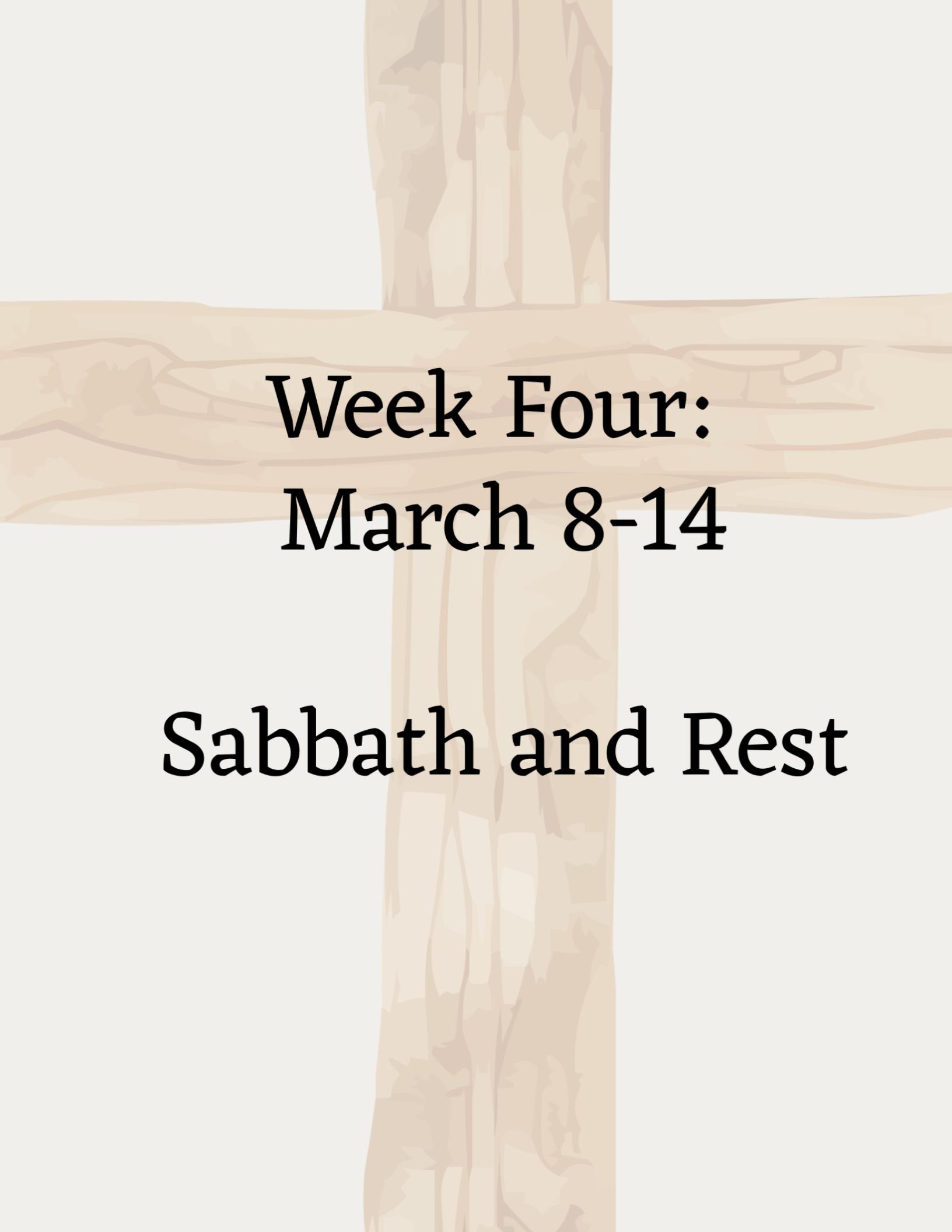
Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your graciousness be known to everyone.

The Lord is near. Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy—dwell on these things.

Reflection Questions:

- Do you struggle with anxiety? How does this passage tell us to work through our worries?
- What does it mean that God's peace surpasses all understanding?
- Why is it important to dwell on the things Paul lists in this passage? How can we practically do that during this Lent season?



Week Four:
March 8-14

Sabbath and Rest

Sunday March 8: Your Local Church

As you attend church today, spend intentional time seeking the Lord among other believers. You are welcome to use the questions below to help you think through how God moved within your church today.

- Who in your church family encouraged you today?
- Did a specific song move your heart? Why?
- What was the focus in this pastor's sermon? Did anything specific stick out to you as you listened?
- How are you going to implement what you heard and felt at church into your upcoming week?



Monday March 9: Genesis 2:1-3, Exodus 23:10-12, Exodus 31-12-17

So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed. On the seventh day God had completed his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he rested from all his work of creation.

“Sow your land for six years and gather its produce. But during the seventh year you are to let it rest and leave it uncultivated, so that the poor among your people may eat from it and the wild animals may consume what they leave. Do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove.

“Do your work for six days but rest on the seventh day so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female slave as well as the resident alien may be refreshed.

The Lord said to Moses, “Tell the Israelites: You must observe my Sabbaths, for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, so that you will know that I am the Lord who consecrates you. Observe the Sabbath, for it is holy to you. Whoever profanes it must be put to death. If anyone does work on it, that person must be cut off from his people. Work may be done for six days, but on the seventh day there must be a Sabbath of complete rest, holy to the Lord. Anyone who does work on the Sabbath day must be put to death. The Israelites must observe the Sabbath, celebrating it throughout their generations as a permanent covenant. It is a sign forever between me and the Israelites, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, but on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.”

Reflection Questions:

- Why do you think God rested on the 7th day after he created everything?
- What does a Sabbath rest mean? Why does God put this day as a requirement in His Law?
- Do you find it difficult to take intentional times of Sabbath rest? Why?

Tuesday March 10: Matthew 11:25-30

At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, because this was your good pleasure. All things have been entrusted to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son desires to reveal him.

“Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

In this passage, Jesus praises the Father for the way he reveals His kingdom to the unexpected. God shows himself, not to the wise or the powerful but instead to those who know they are helpless like infants. Jesus reveals himself to be God and shows God's character as one who is humble and lowly. Jesus invites us to follow God by coming to Himself, encouraging us that when we do follow him, we will find rest for our souls. We find this rest because our burden becomes easy and light, for Jesus himself helps us to carry them. We no longer face sin and brokenness alone, but instead we face it with the One who we know is victorious.

Reflection Questions:

- How does Jesus show us the character of God?
- When Jesus says, he will give us rest, does this mean that all of our problems in this life will go away when we follow him? Why or why not?
- How has Jesus lightened your burden and given you rest?

Wednesday March 11: Exodus 16:21-30

They gathered it every morning. Each gathered as much as he needed to eat, but when the sun grew hot, it melted. On the sixth day they gathered twice as much food, four quarts apiece, and all the leaders of the community came and reported this to Moses. He told them, “This is what the Lord has said: ‘Tomorrow is a day of complete rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord. Bake what you want to bake, and boil what you want to boil, and set aside everything left over to be kept until morning.’”

So they set it aside until morning as Moses commanded, and it didn’t stink or have maggots in it. “Eat it today,” Moses said, “because today is a Sabbath to the Lord. Today you won’t find any in the field. For six days you will gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none.”

Yet on the seventh day some of the people went out to gather, but they did not find any. Then the Lord said to Moses, “How long will you refuse to keep my commands and instructions? Understand that the Lord has given you the Sabbath; therefore on the sixth day he will give you two days’ worth of bread. Each of you stay where you are; no one is to leave his place on the seventh day.” So the people rested on the seventh day.

After God rescued Israel from the land of Egypt, the people had a long trip ahead of them to get to the Promised Land of Canaan. Soon after they began their journey, the people complained of hunger, and Moses sought the Lord for relief. God promised to miraculously provide manna and quail so the people would have food, but he would only provide the amount that they needed for each day. In addition, on the Sabbath day, no food would come and instead the people were required to gather enough food the day before to last two days.

The people did not follow these instructions (at least not the first time). God asked them to trust him for their provisions, and they did not believe that he would give them enough. They did not want to rest out of fear that God would not supply their needs, but He proved them wrong and continued to take care of them even after their disobedience.

Reflection Questions:

- Do you struggle to trust God for your needs? How does this impact the way you rest?
- What does this passage teach us about God’s patience with His people?
- How can you take time to properly rest this week?

Thursday March 12: Mark 2:23-28

On the Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and his disciples began to make their way, picking some heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, “Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?”

He said to them, “Have you never read what David and those who were with him did when he was in need and hungry — how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar the high priest and ate the bread of the Presence —which is not lawful for anyone to eat except the priests —and also gave some to his companions?” Then he told them, “The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. So then, the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

The Pharisees saw the Sabbath as a time for legalism rather than a time for intentional rest and devotion to the Lord. They cared about the rules of the Sabbath more than the heart behind it, so when Jesus and his disciples picked food to eat on the Sabbath, they were outraged. They questioned Jesus' knowledge of the Law and accused him of disobedience, yet Jesus used this moment to teach them a lesson instead. He reminded them that the Sabbath was made to benefit people, not to be a burden. The time of Sabbath is not a chance for legalism and rules but rather it is a day to reflect on the Lord and trust him for our needs.

Reflection Questions:

- How can we keep from making the Sabbath into legalistic rules?
- Why would Jesus use an Old Testament story to rebuke the Pharisees' perceptions of the Sabbath?
- What does Jesus mean when he says the Sabbath was made for man?

Friday March 13: Proverbs 3:21-26

Maintain sound wisdom and discretion.
My son, don't lose sight of them.

They will be life for you
and adornment for your neck.

Then you will go safely on your way;
your foot will not stumble.

When you lie down, you will not be afraid;
you will lie down, and your sleep will be pleasant.

Don't fear sudden danger
or the ruin of the wicked when it comes,

for the Lord will be your confidence
and will keep your foot from a snare.

In the first chapter of Proverbs, King Solomon writes that wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord (1:7). Our respect and reverence for God is the foundation for wise living, and he continues that thought here in chapter 3. When we maintain sound wisdom and discretion, which both come from God, then we will not need to worry about what is to come in the future. We can truly rest knowing that when we possess wisdom from the Lord, He always leads us in a way that leads to his glory and our good. This means that no matter what obstacle we face, we can sleep in peace knowing that God is going to guide us in the right direction.

Reflection Questions:

- How do we gain wisdom from God?
- Does this passage mean that when we have wisdom we will never face hard times? Why or why not?
- Why is it important to know that when sudden danger or stumbling comes, God is our confidence?

Saturday March 14: Psalm 46

God is our refuge and strength,
a helper who is always found
in times of trouble.

Therefore we will not be afraid,
though the earth trembles
and the mountains topple
into the depths of the seas,

though its water roars and foams
and the mountains quake with its turmoil. *Selah*

There is a river—
its streams delight the city of God,
the holy dwelling place of the Most High.

God is within her; she will not be toppled.
God will help her when the morning dawns.

Nations rage, kingdoms topple;
the earth melts when he lifts his voice.

The Lord of Armies is with us;
the God of Jacob is our stronghold. *Selah*

Come, see the works of the Lord,
who brings devastation on the earth.

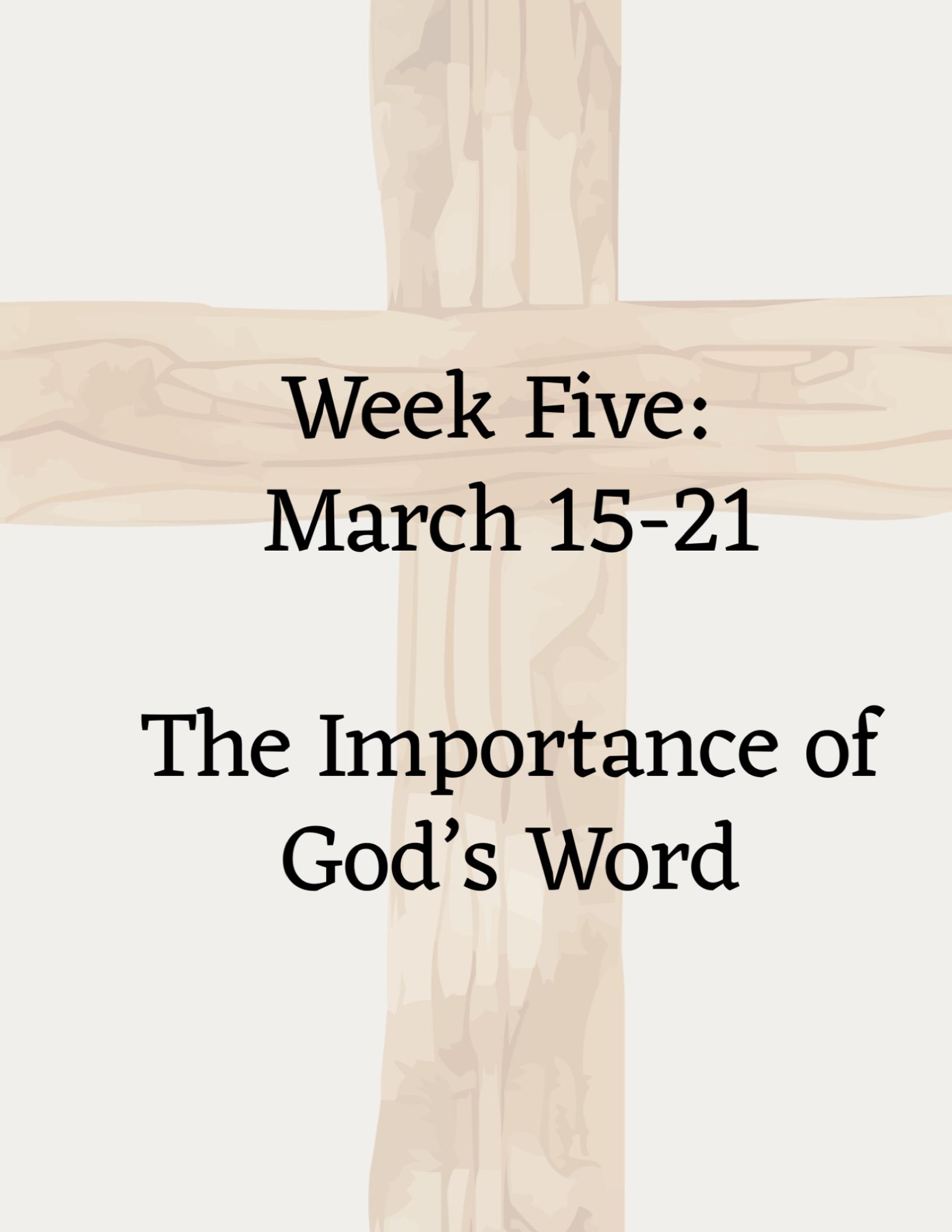
He makes wars cease throughout the earth.
He shatters bows and cuts spears to pieces;
he sets wagons ablaze.

“Stop fighting, and know that I am God,
exalted among the nations, exalted on the earth.”

The Lord of Armies is with us;
the God of Jacob is our stronghold. *Selah*

Reflection Questions:

- Why does the fact that God is our refuge and strength help us to rest?
- What does it mean that God is with us?
- How do we “stop fighting and know that [He is] God? How does this command give us peace?



Week Five: March 15-21

The Importance of God's Word

Sunday March 15: Your Local Church

As you attend church today, spend intentional time seeking the Lord among other believers. You are welcome to use the questions below to help you think through how God moved within your church today.

- Who in your church family encouraged you today?
- Did a specific song move your heart? Why?
- What was the focus in this pastor's sermon? Did anything specific stick out to you as you listened?
- How are you going to implement what you heard and felt at church into your upcoming week?



Monday March 16: Deuteronomy 6:1-9

This is the command—the statutes and ordinances—the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you, so that you may follow them in the land you are about to enter and possess. Do this so that you may fear the Lord your God all the days of your life by keeping all his statutes and commands I am giving you, your son, and your grandson, and so that you may have a long life. Listen, Israel, and be careful to follow them, so that you may prosper and multiply greatly, because the Lord, the God of your ancestors, has promised you a land flowing with milk and honey.

“Listen, Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your city gates.

This passage is called the “Shema.” Moses is giving a speech to Israel and telling them the key to their blessing—to follow God and keep His commandments. They are nearing the time to finally enter the Promised Land, but in order to truly thrive in their new land, they must remember God and His Law. Moses reminded them that they were not only supposed to keep God’s Law themselves, but they were also commanded to teach God’s Law to the generations to come after them.

Reflection Questions:

- What did God promise to Israel if they kept His Law?
- Why was it so important for Israel to pass down the Law of God to future generations?
- What does this passage teach us about how we are to pass down God’s truth to our own children?

Tuesday March 17: Joshua 1:1-9

After the death of Moses the Lord's servant, the Lord spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses's assistant: "Moses my servant is dead. Now you and all the people prepare to cross over the Jordan to the land I am giving the Israelites. I have given you every place where the sole of your foot treads, just as I promised Moses. Your territory will be from the wilderness and Lebanon to the great river, the Euphrates River—all the land of the Hittites—and west to the Mediterranean Sea. No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. I will be with you, just as I was with Moses. I will not leave you or abandon you."

"Be strong and courageous, for you will distribute the land I swore to their ancestors to give them as an inheritance. Above all, be strong and very courageous to observe carefully the whole instruction my servant Moses commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right or the left, so that you will have success wherever you go. This book of instruction must not depart from your mouth; you are to meditate on it day and night so that you may carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do. Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Moses, the great leader of Israel, died, and God chose Joshua as his successor. Joshua faced a great challenge, bringing the people into Canaan and conquering the peoples who were already living in the land. God reminded him of his mission and also reassured him of the promise that the land would be theirs. God also gives him a reminder—follow the book of instruction and remember everything within its pages. For God's Word is the foundation for knowing Him, and when we follow Him, he will be present to guide us wherever we go.

Reflection Questions:

- How do you think Joshua felt as he became the next leader after Moses?
- Why is it important for us to remember God's Word at all times, especially when we face a challenge that seems beyond our abilities?
- What is your method for studying God's Word? How do you spend intentional time in His Word in your daily life?

Wednesday March 18: 2 Timothy 3:12-16

In fact, all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. Evil people and impostors will become worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed. You know those who taught you, and you know that from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Reflection Questions:

- How does it make you feel to know that all who want to live a godly life will be persecuted?
- How do the Scriptures help us when we face persecution?
- What are all the things that Scripture is profitable for? How does it equip us to do good works?

Thursday March 19: 2 Timothy 3:12-16

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. All things were created through him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. That light shines in the darkness, and yet the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world was created through him, and yet the world did not recognize him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, he gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born, not of natural descent, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John testified concerning him and exclaimed, “This was the one of whom I said, ‘The one coming after me ranks ahead of me, because he existed before me.’”) Indeed, we have all received grace upon grace from his fullness, for the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. The one and only Son, who is himself God and is at the Father’s side—he has revealed him.

“The Word is the communication of the Father. He is the rational force of Fatherly fulsomeness overflowing in infinite goodness. That Word was no impersonal force but a full person, alongside the Father at the principial moment of all things. The Word was both *with* God and *was* God. Was and with. What God was, the Word was. The Word was God, and the Word was with God. Coequal, indistinguishable, yet distinct.”

James M. Hamilton Jr.
“What did John Mean When He Called Jesus the Word?”
www.crossway.com

Reflection Questions:

- What does this passage teach us about Jesus as God?
- What does this passage teach us about Jesus as human?
- How do we become children of God?

Friday March 20: Psalm 119:105-112

Your word is a lamp for my feet
and a light on my path.

I have solemnly sworn
to keep your righteous judgments.

I am severely afflicted;
Lord, give me life according to your word.

Lord, please accept my freewill offerings of praise,
and teach me your judgments.

My life is constantly in danger,
yet I do not forget your instruction.

The wicked have set a trap for me,
but I have not wandered from your precepts.

I have your decrees as a heritage forever;
indeed, they are the joy of my heart.

I am resolved to obey your statutes
to the very end.

Reflection Questions:

- What does it mean that God's Word is a lamp to our feet?
- How does God's Word give us life when we're afflicted?
- Is God's Word the joy of your heart? Why or why not?

Saturday March 21: James 1:19-25

My dear brothers and sisters, understand this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger, for human anger does not accomplish God's righteousness. Therefore, ridding yourselves of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, humbly receive the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. Because if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like someone looking at his own face in a mirror. For he looks at himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of person he was. But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer who works—this person will be blessed in what he does.

In his letter, James offers insight into how our faith interacts with our actions. Our faith in Christ should be evident in our lives. God's Word should change our hearts, humbling us and challenging us to honor Christ with how we interact with others.

Reflection Questions:

- Are you quick to listen and slow to speak?
- What does it mean to be a doer of the Word and not only a hearer?
- How does God's Word save our souls?



Week Six:

March 22-28

A Transformed Life

Sunday March 22: Your Local Church

As you attend church today, spend intentional time seeking the Lord among other believers. You are welcome to use the questions below to help you think through how God moved within your church today.

- Who in your church family encouraged you today?
- Did a specific song move your heart? Why?
- What was the focus in this pastor's sermon? Did anything specific stick out to you as you listened?
- How are you going to implement what you heard and felt at church into your upcoming week?



Monday March 23: 1 Peter 1:3-9, Hebrews 11:1

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. You are being guarded by God's power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. You rejoice in this, even though now for a short time, if necessary, you suffer grief in various trials so that the proven character of your faith—more valuable than gold which, though perishable, is refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen him, you love him; though not seeing him now, you believe in him, and you with inexpressible and glorious joy, because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen.

Peter opens his first letter with this important reminder to the church: your trials have a purpose. We often feel as though God is absent in our suffering or that He is apathetic to our troubles, but Peter tells us that God is not only present with us in our suffering, but he is actually able to use it for our good. God refines our faith through our trials just like gold is refined through fire.

Reflection Questions:

- What does it mean that we have a “living hope?”
- How does this passage give insight to the trials we experience? What is the purpose of them?
- What is the goal of our faith? What do these two passages teach us about faith?

Tuesday March 24: Matthew 5:3-12

“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the humble,
for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

“You are blessed when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of me. Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

This famous passage from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is called “The Beatitudes.” To begin his sermon about the Kingdom of God, Jesus lists out these characteristics of one who the Father calls “blessed.”

Reflection Questions:

- Do any of these characteristics of a blessed person surprise you?
- How is this list different than what the rest of the world would consider blessed?
- What do these characteristics teach us about the Kingdom of God?

Wednesday March 25: Colossians 3:1-11

So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Therefore, put to death what belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, God's wrath is coming upon the disobedient, and you once walked in these things when you were living in them. But now, put away all the following: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and filthy language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self. You are being renewed in knowledge according to the image of your Creator. In Christ there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all.

Reflection Questions:

- What does it mean for us to seek the things above?
- Do you struggle with any of the sins listed in this passage? How can you rely upon God to help you overcome them?
- Why is it important to know that there is no favoritism or segregation within the Kingdom of God?

Thursday March 26: Galatians 4:13-15, 5:22-23

For you were called to be free, brothers and sisters; only don't use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but serve one another through love. For the whole law is fulfilled in one statement: **Love your neighbor as yourself.** But if you bite and devour one another, watch out, or you will be consumed by one another.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things.

When we are in Christ, we find freedom because we are no longer under the bondage of sin. Sin no longer controls our destiny because Jesus offers forgiveness and redemption from our sin. However, just because we are forgiven of our sins does not give us the excuse to abundantly sin simply because we know we are forgiven. God still calls us to live above reproach, looking for the best interests of our neighbors and reflecting the fruits of the Spirit to the world around us.

Reflection Questions:

- Why might we be tempted to use our freedom as Christians to serve our own interests?
- In what ways do you see unhealthy conflict happening between Christians in today's world?
- How do the fruits of the Spirit help us to love our neighbors?

Friday March 27: Psalm 51:1-10

Be gracious to me, God,
according to your faithful love;
according to your abundant compassion,
blot out my rebellion.
Completely wash away my guilt
and cleanse me from my sin.
For I am conscious of my rebellion,
and my sin is always before me.
Against you—you alone—I have sinned
and done this evil in your sight.
So you are right when you pass sentence;
you are blameless when you judge.
Indeed, I was guilty when I was born;
I was sinful when my mother conceived me.
Surely you desire integrity in the inner self,
and you teach me wisdom deep within.
Purify me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
Turn your face away from my sins
and blot out all my guilt.
God, create a clean heart for me
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

King David wrote this psalm of confession after he gravely sinned against Bathsheba and her husband Uriah in 2 Samuel 11. He took advantage of Bathsheba's vulnerability and murdered her husband to hide his guilt. However, though David sinned, when he was confronted, he repented and confessed his sin to God, begging for forgiveness. This psalm serves as an example of how someone who follows Christ should react to sin.

Reflection Questions:

- How should a follower of Christ react to sin according to this Psalm?
- What does David mean when he says he has sinned against God alone?
- Why should we pray for God to create a clean heart within us?

Saturday March 28: Titus 3:1-11

Remind them to submit to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to slander no one, to avoid fighting, and to be kind, always showing gentleness to all people. For we too were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved by various passions and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, detesting one another.

But when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared, he saved us—not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy—through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit. He poured out his Spirit on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior so that, having been justified by his grace, we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life. This saying is trustworthy. I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed God might be careful to devote themselves to good works. These are good and profitable for everyone. But avoid foolish debates, genealogies, quarrels, and disputes about the law, because they are unprofitable and worthless. Reject a divisive person after a first and second warning. For you know that such a person has gone astray and is sinning; he is self-condemned.

Reflection Questions:

- What does this passage teach us about how followers of Christ should live in their communities?
- Why did God pour His Spirit upon us?
- How should the church react to divisive people?

Saturday March 28: Titus 3:1-11

Remind them to submit to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to slander no one, to avoid fighting, and to be kind, always showing gentleness to all people. For we too were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved by various passions and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, detesting one another.

But when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared, he saved us—not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy—through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit. He poured out his Spirit on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior so that, having been justified by his grace, we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life. This saying is trustworthy. I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed God might be careful to devote themselves to good works. These are good and profitable for everyone. But avoid foolish debates, genealogies, quarrels, and disputes about the law, because they are unprofitable and worthless. Reject a divisive person after a first and second warning. For you know that such a person has gone astray and is sinning; he is self-condemned.

Reflection Questions:

- What does this passage teach us about how followers of Christ should live in their communities?
- Why did God pour His Spirit upon us?
- How should the church react to divisive people?



Week Seven:
March 29-April 2

Holy Week

Sunday March 29: Your Local Church

As you attend church today, spend intentional time seeking the Lord among other believers. You are welcome to use the questions below to help you think through how God moved within your church today.

- Did your church teach about Palm Sunday? What is the significance of this day?
- Who in your church family encouraged you today?
- Did a specific song move your heart? Why?
- What was the focus in this pastor's sermon? Did anything specific stick out to you as you listened?
- How are you going to implement what you heard and felt at church into your upcoming week?



Monday March 30: Matthew 21:12-17

Jesus went into the temple and threw out all those buying and selling. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves. He said to them, “It is written, **my house will be called a house of prayer**, but you are making it **a den of thieves!**”

The blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. When the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonders that he did and the children shouting in the temple, “*Hosanna to the Son of David!*” they were indignant and said to him, “Do you hear what these children are saying?”

Jesus replied, “Yes, have you never read:

**You have prepared praise
from the mouths of infants and nursing babies?”**

Then he left them, went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there.

Reflection Questions:

- Why did Jesus overturn the tables in the temple? Why was he so outraged?
- What did Jesus do in the temple after turning over the tables? How does this show the true purpose of the temple?
- Why were the chief priests upset that the children were praising Jesus? How did Jesus respond?

Tuesday March 31: Matthew 21:18-22

Early in the morning, as he was returning to the city, he was hungry. Seeing a lone fig tree by the road, he went up to it and found nothing on it except leaves. And he said to it, “May no fruit ever come from you again!” At once the fig tree withered.

When the disciples saw it, they were amazed and said, “How did the fig tree wither so quickly?”

Jesus answered them, “Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you tell this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ it will be done. And if you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.”

In a day when we are bombarded with Christian commercialism, consumerism, and materialism, when our religion is filled with so much stuff and so much activity, let us not neglect to commune with God through Jesus the King. Third, **let us bear fruit in our lives.** We don't want to be like Israel of old, having all the signs of outward religion, but lacking real spiritual fruit. Jesus curses superficial religion throughout the Gospel of Matthew and throughout Scripture. He hates profession without practice. We shouldn't have songs on our lips without surrender in our lives, for we cannot separate outward acts from inward affection. **This King desires—and deserves—more than hollow worship and hypocritical religion.** Let us be on guard as a result of this text, and let us bear fruit in keeping with faith.

David Platt, *Exalting Jesus in Matthew.*

Reflection Questions:

- Why did Jesus curse the fig tree?
- What is the fruit that we are supposed to bear in our lives? (Hint: Galatians 5)
- Is Jesus saying that if we believe we can ask for whatever we want from God and He will do it?
Why or why not?

Wednesday April 1: Matthew 26:6-16

While Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, a woman approached him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume. She poured it on his head as he was reclining at the table. When the disciples saw it, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked. "This might have been sold for a great deal and given to the poor."

Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a noble thing for me. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me. By pouring this perfume on my body, she has prepared me for burial. Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her."

Then one of the Twelve, the man called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" So they weighed out thirty pieces of silver for him. And from that time he started looking for a good opportunity to betray him.

We see two different people react to Jesus in this scene—the woman with the perfume and Judas Iscariot. One worships and gives her most valuable perfume and the other betrays his Master for the price of a slave (Exodus 21:32).

Reflection Questions:

- What does it teach us about Jesus that he allowed the woman to worship him?
- Why does Jesus tell his disciples that the woman prepared him for burial?
- Why do you think Matthew put these two scenes together of Judas Iscariot and the woman ?

Thursday April 2: John 13:1-15

Before the Passover Festival, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

Now when it was time for supper, the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas, Simon Iscariot's son, to betray him. Jesus knew that the Father had given everything into his hands, that he had come from God, and that he was going back to God. So he got up from supper, laid aside his outer clothing, took a towel, and tied it around himself. Next, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet and to dry them with the towel tied around him.

He came to Simon Peter, who asked him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus answered him, "What I'm doing you don't realize now, but afterward you will understand."

"You will never wash my feet," Peter said.

Jesus replied, "If I don't wash you, you have no part with me."

Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head."

"One who has bathed," Jesus told him, "doesn't need to wash anything except his feet, but he is completely clean. You are clean, but not all of you." For he knew who would betray him. This is why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

When Jesus had washed their feet and put on his outer clothing, he reclined again and said to them, "Do you know what I have done for you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are speaking rightly, since that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done for you.

Reflection Questions:

- Why did Peter reject to Jesus washing his feet? How did he react to Jesus' answer to his objection?
- What does it teach us about Jesus that he knew what Judas had done and yet washed his feet anyway?
- Why did Jesus wash the disciples' feet?

Friday April 3 through Sunday April 5

Good Friday - Matthew 27:1-61

Jesus is betrayed and handed over to be crucified. On the cross, he takes his last breath and is buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea

Holy Saturday - Matthew 27: 62-66, Luke 23:54-56

A day of waiting. Jesus lay dead in the tomb, and Roman guards stood by to make sure no one tampered with his body. A heavy stone blocked the way into Jesus' tomb, and the world cried in anguish. Was he truly the Messiah?

Easter Sunday - Matthew 28:1-10, Luke 24:1-12

The women returned to the tomb, ready to honor Jesus' body, but when they arrived, they encountered angels! These angels asked the most important question in all of history, "Why are you looking for the living among the dead?" Jesus had risen! And He is alive today!

