



Anderson's Faith Journey Through Prayer & Fasting

40 Days Prayer & Fasting

Day 1

Psalm 58:6-7

Ash Wednesday

Fasting Biblically

Fasting is an ancient biblical and spiritual tool for revitalizing the body and spirit. For centuries, people have used the spiritual discipline of fasting as a means to grow deeper into their relationship with God. To fast biblically is going without food or drink voluntarily for a specific time and generally for religious purposes. According to scholars, the Old Testament normally gives three common reasons for fasting: to express distress, grief, or repentance. *(Bishop Sharma Lewis)*

Scripture Reading:

Genesis 17:7

Key Passages:

Isaiah 58:6-7 – “Is not this the fast that I choose, to lose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?”

Fasting Thought:

God established an everlasting covenant between himself and man whereas he would be our God forever. This covenant is an agreement with us in which he asks for our obedience and our trust in him, and he will fulfill his promises to us.
(Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams)

Prayer:

Lord, for the next forty days, allow me to renew my faith as I work towards a closer relationship with you. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 2

Psalm 51

First Thursday of Lent

Repentance

David writes this psalm confessing his sinful nature and asking God for forgiveness. According to scholars, David's confession is regarded as a model for forgiveness and true repentance in Christianity. *Forgiveness* refers to God's pardon for the sins of human beings. *Repentance* has been described as turning away from sin, disobedience, or rebellion, and turning back to God. (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

2 Samuel 11-12

Key Passage:

2 Samuel 12:13 – “David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the Lord.’ Nathan said to David, ‘Now the Lord has put away your sin; you shall not die.’”

Fasting Thought:

God is a forgiving God. He wants everyone to spend Eternal Life with him. Repentance (turning away from sin) is required. Once Nathan opened David's mind to his sins, he confessed to God, asked God for forgiveness, and repented. David not only opened his mind to his sins, but he also opened his mouth and his heart. God answered by forgiving David and allowing him to live! (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer:

Lord, please forgive me for my sins. “Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me and I will be whiter than snow” (Psalm 51:7). Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 3

Romans 1:8-17

First Friday of Lent

Righteousness

Paul's statement in verse (17), "For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.' In salvation, God seeks to replace our unrighteousness with a righteousness that God develops in us. God's desire is for humanity to live, think, and act righteously." (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

Romans 12:1-2a

Key Passage:

Roman 1:16 – "For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Fasting Thought:

The Gospel is the Good News of Jesus Christ. He proclaimed the Good News everywhere he traveled: lifting those who were least; putting first those who were last; and finding those who were lost. Society considered them outcasts; Jesus considered them worthy to be saved. The Good News, being the power of God for salvation, wiped away their shamefulfulness and humiliation. Their faith in Christ made them whole. (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer:

Lord, please give me the eagerness and the courage to proclaim your Gospel and not be ashamed. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 4

Matthew 18:1-7

First Saturday of Lent

Protecting the Children

Jesus warns the disciples in Matthew 18:5-9 that there will be eternal punishment for anyone who causes harm to “these little ones.” As leaders, it is our responsibility to help young people develop their faith and protect them from harm that may lead to sin. Matthew 18:1-7 and Matthew 9:22-26 exemplify Jesus’ tender spot for children and his passion to protect them from harm. (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

Matthew 28:18-19

Key Passage:

Matthew 18:4 – “Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

Fasting Thought:

Have you ever listened to the innocence of a child? Innocence is “finding no fault.” The innocence of a child is pure; sincere; honest; and trusting. When you “listen” to the innocence of a child through your heart you hear inner peace; you feel inner love; and you burst with inner joy which flows from your heart and enters the atmosphere, spreading unselfishly to others. (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer:

Lord, help me to possess a child-like faith to enter the kingdom of heaven. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 5

1 Kings 19:1-8

First Monday of Lent

Depression

Depression is a struggle for many, and we must never feel ashamed or alone. God gives us the spiritual tools of prayer, fasting, and worship to conquer the low feelings we experience in life. God also gives us the wisdom to seek wise counsel when we are constantly battling with our emotions. *(Bishop Sharma Lewis)*

Scripture Reading:

1 Kings 18:41

Key Passage:

1 Kings 18:41 – “Elijah said to Ahab ‘Go up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of rushing rain.’”

Fasting Thought:

God is a God of renewal and restoration. Even when our situations seem dire, God will step in and make the impossible possible. 1 Kings 17:1 tells us that a drought was coming upon the land; 1 Kings 18:1 tells us that three years passed, and the drought was still ongoing; 1 Kings 18:41 tells us that the drought ended. Three years is a long time for water not to replenish the earth. Vegetation suffers, the earth suffers, animals suffer, and humanity suffers. But God steps in and renews and restores what was lost. When the possible seems impossible, don’t give in to the droughts in your life. Wait patiently for God to send the rain your way. *(Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams)*

Prayer:

Heal me, Lord, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved, for you are the one I praise” (Jeremiah 17:14). Please guard my heart against depression and help me fight against the challenges I face today.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 6

Genesis 4:1-16

First Tuesday of Lent

My Brothers' Keepers

What are we to learn from the first children created by Adam and Eve? We learn that our actions, attitudes, and the consequences of sin have devastating repercussions. According to scholars, Abel, the first murder victim, is sometimes perceived as the first martyr while Cain, the first murderer, is sometimes perceived as an ancestor of evil, violence and greed. God cautions Cain in verse (7) about the struggle of sin: 'If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.'" *(Bishop Sharma Lewis)*

Scripture Reading:

1 John 3:12

Key Passage:

Genesis 4:9 – "Then the Lord said to Cain, 'Where is your brother, Abel?' He said, 'I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?'"

Fasting Thought:

To "crouch" means "to lower the body stance by bending the legs." In this type of stance, one is usually ready to pounce on something or someone. The targeted victim is usually unaware that the "crouch" is taking place. Sin is always "crouching" at your door. It is always trying to find some way into your life so that it can rule over you. This is why you should always have someone you can trust who will hold you accountable for your actions. When you have someone to hold you accountable, that person is holding you up, so that when sin is crouching at your door, you are standing tall, alert, and ready to resist whatever sin is trying to deliver. *(Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams)*

Prayer:

Lord, I am my brothers' and my sisters' guardian. "And what does the Lord require of me? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with my God" (Micah 6:8).

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 7

Psalm 32

First Wednesday of Lent

Forgiveness

God's forgiveness demands that we forgive others because grace brings responsibility and obligation. God wants to forgive sinners because forgiveness has always been a part of God's loving character. As Christians, we are required to forgive those who sin against us. *(Bishop Sharma Lewis)*

Scripture Reading:

Matthew 18:21-22

Key Passage:

Psalm 32:5 – “Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,’ and you forgave the guilt of my sin.”

Fasting Thought:

Confession of sin to God is a relief to both heart and mind. When one confesses to God, a heavy burden is removed, and the heart becomes lighter. The heart begins to sing, and a feeling of peace overwhelms the Spirit. Confession also leads to salvation. *(Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams)* Romans 10:9 says, “Because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Prayer:

O Lord, my sins are forever before me. I confess my faults and ask for your forgiveness. Restore me, O Lord, to be in fellowship with you. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 8

2 Timothy 1:3-7

Second Thursday of Lent

Spiritual Gifts

Spiritual gifts are extraordinary abilities that the Holy Spirit gives to a believer to build up the body of Christ. Nonbelievers are not spiritually gifted. Various gifts are distributed to bring diversity to the unified body of Christ. I once heard that the desire to discover, develop, and deploy our spiritual gift(s) should be like a fire blazing within us.” *(Bishop Sharma Lewis)*

Scripture Reading:

1 Corinthians 12:7

Key Passage:

2 Timothy 1:6-7 – “For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of hands, for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.”

Fasting Thought:

Your gift is a present which God has given you to open and use on others. You should not be selfish with it by holding on to it for yourself. It is only effective if you use it as God designed it to be used. Your gift is unique in that it is yours and can only be used by you to invoke God’s plan in your life as well as in others. Ephesians 4:12 says that spiritual gifts are used to equip the saints of God for the work of the ministry and for building up the body of Christ. *(Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams)*

Prayer:

O Lord, please breathe on me right now a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 9

Psalm 121

Second Friday of Lent

I Lift Up My Eyes to the Hills

As we journey together for the next several weeks, I pray that you will have confidence in knowing that there is no problem our Lord and Savior can't handle. If you are troubled about your marriage, if a loved one is facing an incurable illness, if you have experienced a rocky relationship, or you are feeling completely depleted and frustrated with your walk with God, there are hidden nuggets in this passage that can give you direction. *(Bishop Sharma Lewis)*

Scripture Reading:

Psalm 46:1

Key Passages:

Psalm 121:1-2 – "I lift up my eyes to the hills from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth."

Fasting Thought:

When we are troubled and need someone to talk to or someone to listen to us, we should call upon the Lord. He will remind us that 1) He is our keeper; 2) He neither sleeps nor slumber; and 3) He will keep us from all kinds of evil. He said that He would never leave us nor forsake us. Believe Him and take him at his word. *(Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams)*

Prayer:

O Lord, your Word in Hebrews 13:6 reminds me, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?" Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 10

Luke 7:1-10

Second Saturday of Lent

The Power of Words

The Bible teaches us that our tongues have a lot of power. Used appropriately, words can warrant a positive outcome; but misused, they can destroy and warrant repercussions. (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

James 3:9-10

Key Passage:

Luke 7:9 – “When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, he said, ‘I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith.’”

Fasting Thought:

What did Jesus hear that was so amazing? He “heard,” as verses (6-8) tells us, the faith of the Centurion. The Centurion believed that the spoken word of Jesus from afar was enough to heal his servant. Would Jesus be amazed at what he “heard” regarding your faith? (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer:

O Lord, give me a tame tongue. Let me think before I speak. Let me build others up and not tear them down. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 11

Numbers 21:4-9

Second Monday of Lent

God's Compassion

The focus of this story is not the deadly bite of the venomous snakes, but their healing power. Once the Israelites confess their sins before God, God instructs Moses to “make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.” Moses makes a replica of the snake called *Nahash Nehoshet*, the serpent of bronze, which has the power to heal anyone who looks at it. (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

Psalm 78:2, 10-11

Key Passage:

Numbers 21:7-8 – “The people came to Moses and said, ‘We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us.’ So, Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Make a poisonous serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.’”

Fasting Thought:

So many times, the people rebelled against the Lord and against Moses. So many times, Moses prayed and interceded on the people's behalf. So many times, the Lord showed compassion for the people. The Lord is a compassionate God who loves us and wants us all to be saved and to spend eternal life with him in heaven. (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer:

O Lord, how excellent is your name upon the earth! I pray that the lost will come to know you and have the opportunity to make you their Lord. Amen

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 12

Isaiah 65:17-65

Second Tuesday of Lent

New Things

The prophet Isaiah has described the pictorial image of the new heavens and the new earth. The creation of a new heaven and earth refers to God as the one who “creates” new things, past and present. What would this new heaven and new earth look like? As per John in Revelation 21:4: “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

2 Peter 3:13

Key Passages:

Isaiah 65:17-18 – “For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight.”

Fasting Thought:

In the beginning when God created the heavens, the earth, and all that is in them, he started from chaos and created a world in which he stated that everything was “good.” Chaos returned and the world became more chaotic. Eventually, God decided to create a better world by creating new heavens and a new earth whereas the former things would be forgotten. This new earth will be the paradise that God intended for his original created earth. (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer:

O Lord, let me take strength in knowing that you have prepared a place for the redeemed.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 13

Psalm 128

Second Wednesday of Lent

Obedience

As believers, why should we obey God? 1) Obedience demonstrates our faith and trust in God. Faith enables us as believers to please God. Trust is a conscious dependence on God and is found in our belief that God will indeed work on our behalf to bring God's perfect will for our lives; 2) Living in obedience means following God's Word; and 3) Obedience is the key to receiving God's promises. There are six thousand promises of God in the Bible. God knows what is best for us. *(Bishop Sharma Lewis)*

Scripture Reading:

Isaiah 55:8

Key Passages:

Psalm 128:1-2 – "Happy is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in his ways. You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands, you shall be happy, and it shall go well with you."

Fasting Thought:

A happy person is characterized by well-being and contentment. It is good to be around someone who is happy and carries a positive attitude versus a negative attitude. A happy person who loves the Lord is favored by him because they walk in his ways, and they trust him to always be their God. *(Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams)*

Prayer:

O Lord, I know that one of the ways to worship and glorify you is through my obedience. Teach me how to walk in your obedience. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 14

Exodus 16:1-8

Third Thursday of Lent

God Provides

Upon examination of the scriptures, I believe obedience comes with rewards, and disobedience yields consequences. The question that faces us daily is whom do we obey? As believers, we must approach every moment in time with God's voice and be obedient to God's plan. God's plan and purpose for your life are not dependent upon what you can or can't do. It depends on your willingness to do what God instructs you to do. *(Bishop Sharma Lewis)*

Scripture Reading:

Isaiah 58:11

Key Passage:

Exodus 16:4 – “Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather them for that day. In that way, I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not.’”

Fasting Thought:

God will provide. We must be obedient to him, trusting and believing in his promises. Just as he is faithful to us, we must be faithful to him. God will test us; but as James 1:13 states, “He will never tempt us.” *(Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams)*

Prayer:

O Lord, help me to know that you have a proven track record. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 15

Psalm 95

Third Friday of Lent

Worship

Worshipping is giving of our entire self--our thoughts and our emotions—for God to use. However, what we call “worship” is too often entertainment, and we evaluate the effectiveness of worship by how we feel. Worship is never about us. When we come to God in worship, we should proclaim that God is worthy and worthy to be praised! (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

Psalm 95

Key Passages:

Psalm 95:6-7 – “O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. O that today you would listen to his voice!”

Fasting Thought:

God is the one and only true living God. He is not a hand-crafted, carved from a tree, dipped in gold or silver, placed on a shelf in need of periodic dusting, idol god. He is the God who planted and watered the seed, that grew the tree, from which idols are made. He is our God—our Shepherd—who watches over us, never leaving us, never forsaking us, forever in our midst. He deserves our praise and worship. (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer:

O Lord, come let us worship you in Spirit and in truth. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 16

John 4:1-6

Third Saturday of Lent

The Living Water

The exchange between Jesus and the Samaritan woman is a deep, personal, and theological conversation that eventually bears witness to his identity as the Messiah. Although, culture dictated that she was inferior because of her ethnicity, sex, and marital status, none of this mattered to Jesus because he saw her in need of salvation. When Jesus initiates the conversation at Jacob's well with a request for water, the Samaritan woman immediately puts up the ethnic barrier between them: "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink? (Few Jews do not associate with Samaritans). *(Bishop Sharma Lewis)*

Scripture Reading:

John 7:37-39

Key Passage:

John 4:10 – "Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.'"

Fasting Thought:

Have you ever had a thirst that seemed like it could not be satisfied? You drink and drink and drink (water), but you have an unquenchable thirst. The water is chilled with ice, and you feel it's coldness on your tongue and in your mouth as it enters your body giving the necessary nourishment from it that you need to survive. Jesus offers water that is necessary for you to survive as well. However, as he stated to the Samaritan woman in John 4:13-14, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." The living water that Jesus offers will not chill as ice but will make your heart feel "strangely warm." It will not feel cold on your tongue and in your mouth, but will flow through your body transforming your heart, so that you will "open your mouth and say something" about the "goodness of God." *(Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams)*

Prayer:

O Lord, give me the heart to care and share my faith with others. Amen

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 17

Genesis 24:1-27

Third Monday of Lent

I Give Myself Away

When asked to help someone in need, do you take the initiative? Do you have a servant spirit? Our Lord and Savior demonstrates for us the servant's heart. Jesus explains to his disciples that their practice of servant leadership is to be different from their self-serving leadership style. Jesus says, "Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom." Jesus' mission was to serve others and to give his life away. Our mission is to be an imitator of Jesus Christ and to give our life away. *(Bishop Sharma Lewis)*

Scripture Reading:

Mark 10:45

Key Passages:

Philippians 2:1-4 – "If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others."

Fasting Thought:

There is so much joy when, in Christ, you do things for others. Why? Because when you do things in Christ, you are being selfless, and you are being obedient to God. We are to do nothing from selfish ambition, meaning we are to place the welfare of others before ourselves. We are to think about others as Christ thought about us. *(Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams)*

Prayer:

O Lord, give me a heart to serve humanity. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 18

Psalm 81

Third Tuesday of Lent

The Way to Salvation

Jesus provides the way to salvation for all of God's children. God, the creator and sustainer of the universe, has sent his Son to be our forerunner through his passion, death, and resurrection. Jesus had to endure the ultimate suffering of the cross to make atonement for the sins of the people. He chose freely to suffer for humanity and His faithfulness freed us from sin and death. As the pioneer of salvation, Christ has gone through what we go through (suffering and death) and can bring us closer to our common Father. Jesus functioned as the "merciful and faithful high priest" between God and humanity. (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

Hebrews 2:10-18

Key Passages:

Hebrews 2:16-17 – "For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore, he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people."

Fasting Thought:

When Jesus came to earth, he experienced the same emotions, hurts, joys, etc. that we, his brothers, and sisters feel (John 11:35). Jesus (Divine) became like man (human), so that he could save man. The way to salvation is through Jesus Christ. God loved us so much that He sent His only Son to fight a battle for us against sin that we surely would not win without claiming him as our Savior. (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer:

Lord, please allow someone to cross my path who does not have a personal relationship with you. Please use me to share my salvation.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 19

Jeremiah 2:4-13

Third Wednesday of Lent

Have We Abandoned God?

Jeremiah prophesied in a day when the people of Judah had abandoned God and were no longer depending on God to supply their needs. Jeremiah Chapter 2 reveals they had created cisterns of idolatry and immorality for themselves, hoping that the pleasures of those sins could satisfy their needs. Interestingly, the Israelites quickly discovered that the cisterns they made were broken and could never quench their spiritual thirst. Jeremiah accused them of committing two sins: 1) they had forsaken God and 2) their cisterns were cracked and could not hold water.” Questions: Is it possible today that believers have abandoned God? Are we looking for God in our careers, our financial portfolios, or our political associations? Have we built “cisterns” that will never be able to quench our thirst because we are not spending quality time cultivating our relationship with God? (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

John 6:35

Key Passage:

Jeremiah 2:13 – “For my people have committed two evils: They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water.”

Fasting Thought:

Bishop Lewis asks the question: Is it possible today that believers have abandoned God? Look around at society today. What do you see? Do you see signs of God’s people abandoning Him as they did so long ago? God’s people of yesterday, those who the Bible speak to us about, those who the prophets, (both major and minor) spoke directly to when delivering God’s Word, those who witnessed the miracles of Jesus, those who walked and talked with Jesus, etc., abandoned God and decided to follow the teachings of the Baals, Molech, Chemosh, Asherah, etc. Jeremiah became so frustrated at the people of Judah’s abandonment of God that he wept for them. Jeremiah once broke a vessel as a symbol of the breaking of the nation of Judah and its people. It was broken into fragments because it was useless and could no longer be fixed. This represented how corrupt the people had become because of their abandonment of God. (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer:

O Lord, let me not forsake you for the hustle and grind of the day. Let me drink from the living water that never runs dry. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 20

Ephesians 4:25-32

Fourth Thursday of Lent

Taming the Tongue

The reflection for today admonishes us to not let foul or abusive language come out of our mouths. I believe everything we say should be good, helpful, and encouraging to those who hear. Jesus states in Mark 7:15, "Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them." Words can be a powerful tool to bless or curse, hurt, or heal. (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

Psalm 34:13

Key Passages:

James 3:8-10 – But no one can tame the tongue – a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God.

Fasting Thought:

Have you ever spoken words that you wish that you could retrieve once they have escaped from your mouth? Sometimes we say things like, "Oops that slipped," or "I didn't mean to say that." The tongue is a very powerful tool and can be used to cause a great deal of harm to many. Remember the saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." Well, this "saying" is not true. What you say to people, and how you say it - matters. Look how James describes the tongue – "restless evil, full of deadly poison." We must be mindful of what we say, and how we say it. Remember...your words do matter. (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer:

O Lord, guard my tongue and help me to know what to say and when to say it.
Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 21

Ephesians 5:1-9

Fourth Friday of Lent

Imitators

Our life is to be a life of surrender, suffering, sacrifice, and service. In the original Greek language, the phrase “follow me” is in the present imperative tense, which means there is a continuous action. What Jesus is teaching in the text is, “Let my disciples follow me continually.” As believers, we must walk in the steps of Jesus. When you follow Jesus, there will be favor and blessings in your life. Jesus didn’t tell us to follow his **shadow**. He told us to follow his **glory**. Jesus wants us to follow him rather than lead a life of sin and self-satisfaction. (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

2 Peter 2:21

Key Passage:

John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world that he gave His only Son so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”

Fasting Thought:

In John 3:16, we see that God sent his only Son so that everyone who believes can receive eternal life. To surrender, to suffer, to sacrifice, and to serve, are all attributes of those who repent and believe in the Gospel. Jesus is the perfect example of someone who possessed all these attributes, and we as his followers are to follow his example. (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer:

O Lord, teach me how to model my life after you. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 22

John 1:1-9

Fourth Saturday of Lent

PPPP

There is: No **promise** God can't keep; No **problem** God can't solve; No **pain** God can't comfort; No **prayer** God can't answer. In the text, John taught me that human life is lived in light or darkness. The darkness of evil will never overtake the light of Christ. Jesus Christ is the creator of life, and Jesus bring light to humanity. In the light, we see ourselves as sinners saved by grace through faith. Matthew 5:16 reminds us, "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

Jeremiah 32:17

Key Passages:

John 3:19-20 – "And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed."

Fasting Thought:

People love the dark pleasures of this world (fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these) which kept them in darkness. This is why we, as children of God who walk in the light, should also practice three other P's; prayer, praise, & proclamation. **Prayer** - to keep open communication with God; **praise** – to give honor and glory to God; **proclamation** – to spread the Good News/Gospel of God. (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer:

O Lord, teach me your Word so I may live an abundant life. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 23

Acts 9:1-20

Fourth Monday of Lent

The Encounter

The word encounter, defined by Google, is an unexpected experience. Saul, the persecutor of Christians, didn't encounter just anyone; he encountered the risen Savior. Sharma, the 12-year-old child and the 30-year-old woman didn't encounter just anyone; she encountered her Lord and Savior. (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

Acts 26:12-18

Key Passages:

Acts 8:1-3 – “That day a severe persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria. Devout men buried Stephen and made loud lamentation over him. But Saul was ravaging the church by entering house after house; dragging off both men and women, he committed them to prison.”

Fasting Thought:

When Saul persecuted the church in Jerusalem, he was totally committed to his work of prosecuting those devoted to “the Way.” He ravaged the church by entering and dragging both men and women off to prison. However, once he encountered Christ his entire personality changed. Transformation took place and instead of dragging people off to prison, he became a “prisoner of Christ” himself. (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer: O Lord, I long for a Damascus Road experience. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 24

Psalm 146

Fourth Tuesday of Lent

Seven Reasons to Praise the Lord

Todd Gaddis, author of *Seven Reasons to Praise the Lord*, warns that we must not wait and look back wondering why we didn't praise God more. He suggests that the seven reasons to praise God are as follows: 1) The Bible commands it; 2) Praise facilitates access to God; 3) Praise is where God lives; 4) Praise promotes productivity; 5) Praise chases away despair; 6) Praise is an effective weapon against the devil; 7) God is worthy of it. The structure of Psalm 146:1-4 depicts the reliability of God and unfortunately, our fallibility. The psalmist reminds us in verses (5-9) about the blessings of trusting God by pointing out that God keeps God's promises, upholds the oppressed, feeds the hungry, frees the prisoners, gives sight to the blind, protects the foreigners, and cares for the orphans and widows. (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

Psalm 150

Key Passages:

Exodus 15:20-21 – "Then the prophetess Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. And Miriam sang to them: 'Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.'"

Fasting Thought:

Troubles, heartaches, despair, depression, oppression ... words that can make you feel abandoned, alone, and forsaken. However, happiness, excitement, thankfulness, gratefulness ... words that will make you feel loved, cared about, and believing that joy does come in the morning!!! The Exodus was both an *ending* and a *beginning* for the Israelites. Moses led them as they *walked* through the Red Sea, ending their years of oppression. Miriam led them as they *danced* with excitement and joy, beginning their journey to the Promised Land. (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer:

O Lord, Praise the Lord! How excellent is your name in all the earth! Amen.
Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 25

Matthew 9:27-34

Fourth Wednesday of Lent

Miracles Still Happen

In Matthew 9 the Pharisees accuse Jesus of four different sins: befriending outcasts, blasphemy, irreverence, and serving Satan. The Pharisees only see evil at work; they are not willing to admit the miraculous power of Jesus Christ. Jesus poses a threat to the Pharisees because he weakens their control, challenges their beliefs, and exposes their insincere motives. Instead of Jesus responding to the accusation of serving Satan, he resumes his ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing. (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

Matthew 9:27-31

Key Passages:

Mark 10:46-47 – “They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’”

Fasting Thought:

God always has time for us. Notice in this text that Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho when Bartimaeus called out to him. The text later indicates that Bartimaeus called out a second time and Jesus stood still, called Bartimaeus over to him, and healed Bartimaeus based on his faith. Also notice the reference to lineages, i.e., Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus, Jesus, Son of David.... Several times in the Bible, genealogies are offered so that we can see the heritage of biblical characters. The most important lineage record I feel that we should all want to be referred to is: Linda, daughter of God; Maggie, daughter of God; Christopher, Son of God; Joshua, Son of God. Isn't it great knowing that we all share the same Father and can be referred to as: Children of God!!! (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer: O Lord, touch me and heal me with your mighty power. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 26

Ezekiel 1:1-3; 2:8-3:3

Fifth Thursday of Lent

God Called You

If there is ever a time to study, know, and apply the Word of God to our lives the time is now. Reading the Bible daily provides several benefits. The Bible reveals to us the character of God and shows us God's revelation of God's self to humanity. In the Bible, we experience God's holiness, faithfulness, grace, mercy, and loving character. As you reflect on this Lenten season, what has God called you to do? Has God called you out of your comfort zones to love the unlovable? Has God called you to share your faith with others? We must understand that before we existed on earth, God was shaping us for God's purpose. God knows us intimately and intricately every detail and nuance. God took the time to form each of us precious in God's sight despite our faults. God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things for the Kingdom of God. (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

Psalm 139:13-18

Key Passages:

1 Samuel Chapter 3

Fasting Thought:

Faith-sharing is evangelism. Evangelism is bringing, spreading, or announcing the Good News of the kingdom of God. Ephesians 4:11 tells us that God gave gifts to humanity, and he called some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, and some teachers. 1 Samuel Chapter 3 tells us the story of Samuel's calling and that God called him to be a prophet. Bishop Lewis asked the questions, "What has God called you to do? Has God called you to share your faith with others?" (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer: O Lord, help me to accept and walk in my divine call. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 27

Psalm 130

Fifth Friday of Lent

The Structure of Psalm 130

Psalm 130 contains four parts that are unified by the connecting elements of forgiveness. The structure of Psalm 130 begins with an individual prayer for help: “Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.” The song then shifts, and in verses (3-4), the psalmist points out, “If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness; therefore, you are feared.” Isn’t it reassuring to know that God doesn’t keep a record of our sins and that when God forgives, God forgives completely? Then the Psalmist’s confession of faith takes the form of waiting in hope for the Lord (verses 5-6). Finally, the psalm ends with an appeal for the entire community to hope in the Lord with the same steadfast resolution as the psalmist (verses 7-8). (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

Micah 7:19

Key Passages:

Romans 10:8-10 – “But what does it say? ‘The word is near you, on our lips and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved.”

Fasting Thought:

Believing within the heart that Jesus is Lord and that God raised him from the dead is a part of the Easter Story. Resurrection is a “*raising to life beyond physical death for believers*.” Jesus taught and demonstrated this truth by his miracles as well as his own resurrection. Confessing our sins and asking God to forgive us will lead to our receiving God’s grace. As Micah 7:19 says, “God will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.” (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer:

O Lord, out of my sins, I cry out to you. Please forgive me, O Lord. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 28

Luke 1:26-28

Fifth Saturday of Lent

Annunciation of the Lord

Have you ever wondered why Mary was “chosen” to be the mother of Jesus Christ? The word chosen is defined as being “*selected or marked for favor or special privilege*” (Webster’s Dictionary). Mary is chosen because she has favor with God. Accordingly, the Greek word for favor means “*freely bestowed*” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary). Secondly, Mary is chosen because she is faithful. She is willing to be utilized by God to bring the light-bearer into the world. She knew that she would be criticized and experience slander, despair, and loneliness. She knew that people would gossip and that she would be excluded from her community. However, Mary overcame her fears with faith. Finally, Mary is chosen because God fulfills God’s promise through her. God can work through natural processes to achieve God’s will, and God worked in a special way to allow the Virgin Mary to conceive. When God has favor upon you, God can make the impossible possible. (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

Luke 1:26-38

Key Passages:

Luke 1:30-35 – “The angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.’ Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’ The angel said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.’”

Fasting Thought:

Because Mary found “favor” with God, she received a visit from the angel, Gabriel, with a very important announcement for her. The announcement was that she was going to conceive and give birth to a very special baby. When angels visited women with the message of their pregnancy, the announcement followed a certain pattern: 1) a visit from the angel; 2) the expression of fear; 3) the message - consisting of: a) you are expecting a son...; b) you are to name him _____ ...; c) his future will be ... 4) objection; 5) reassurance by the angel; and 6) the gift of a sign. Although Mary was shocked and amazed by this visit, she was also blessed and highly favored. (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*).

Prayer:

O Lord, please grant me favor in your sight and use me for your glory. Amen.
Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 29

1 Kings 17:17-24

Fifth Monday of Lent

Walking By Faith

As believers, whether we are experiencing great joy or serious pain, how do we walk by faith? Our faith affects how we live and walk with God. Faith is so central to my being; it means clinging to the hope that God will eventually come through in my personal situation. Walking by faith is believing even when you can't see it. Just because you can't see it with the naked eye doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. 2 Corinthians 5:7 says, "For we walk by faith, not by sight (NKJV). Faith is visualizing the future. True faith is characterized by a forward look and an openness to the pull of the future that God has planned. (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

Hebrews Chapter 11

Key Passages:

Hebrews 11:1-3 – "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible."

Fasting Thought:

"What is seen was made from things that are not visible." Every time you open your eyes and see the things of the world it should renew your faith. Why? Because the Creator God created this world from unseen things. He spoke, and nothing became something. He created, and something became everything. He blew into nostrils and man became a living, breathing, human image of himself. Faith – believing in a God who loves and cares for his creation. (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer:

O Lord, help me to walk by faith in believing, obeying, and trusting in your Word. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 30

2 Kings 4:18-37

Fifth Tuesday of Lent

The Spiritual of Giving

Acts 20:35 states, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” How many times have you sacrificed to be a blessing to others? We may not be able to build a room for someone in our home like the Shunammite woman did for Elijah, but God sees what we have and recognizes what we can give. The Spirit of giving directs our attention and heart to Jesus Christ, leading to an increase of joy and a more intimate relationship with Christ. (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

2 Kings 4:8-17

Key Passages:

Luke 21:1-4 – “He looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. He said, ‘Truly I tell you; this poor widow has put in more than all of them; for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on.’”

Fasting Thought:

The widow of Luke 21:1-4 is an example of a parishioner who is “all in” for the ministry of the church. She gave all she had to be a blessing to someone else. Although she did not have much, it was all that she had. Sometimes we do not have much, (time, talent, money, provisions, etc.), but what we have, we should be willing to give it all for Christ. After all, he gave his all (life) for us. (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer:

O Lord, help me to understand that it is more blessed to give than to receive.
Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 31

Psalm 143

Fifth Wednesday of Lent

A Clean Heart

As we examine our psalm for reflection, David is in the midst of enemy oppression, and he desires time alone with God. However, despite the pressures that David faces and the depression that tries to cripple him, he remembers the good things that God has done in his life. David asks God for four things in the text: 1) Save me because of your faithfulness and righteousness (Psalm 143:1); 2) Save me because I reach out to you (Psalm 143:6); 3) Save me because I hide myself in you (Psalm 143:9); 4) Save me because of your name's sake (Psalm 143:11-12). David then calls upon God's grace and mercy to overcome his enemies, recognizing himself as God's servant. (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

Psalms 51:10-12

Key Passage:

Acts 13:22— “When he had removed him, he made David their king. In his testimony about him he said, ‘I have found David, son of Jesse, to be a man after my heart, who will carry out all my wishes.’”

Fasting Thought:

When David came to the realization that his heart needed to be cleanse from his sins by God, he offered himself willingly to God through prayer. He petitioned God asking him to clean his heart and to deliver him so that he could receive salvation. (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer:

O Lord, in my times of adversity, deliver me from my circumstances and help me to remember your goodness. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 32

Philippians 1:1-11

Sixth Thursday of Lent

The Power of Prayer

Prayer is the discipline that guides us into an everlasting communion with God. Prayer has power over everything! It is a powerful tool with mysterious power. How many times have you prayed, and you knew it was only God that could have answered your requests? (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

Psalm 25

Key Passages:

Matthew 6:5-13

Fasting Thought:

Prayer is our time to communicate with God in which we lift others up to him, we intercede on others' behalf to him, we talk with him about ourselves, we give him gratitude for all that he does for us, and we praise him. God listens to our prayers, and he appreciate the time that we spend with him. He is a loving Father who cares about all his children. He is a caring Father who watches over his children. He is "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us to the time of trial but rescue us from the evil one." (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer:

Lord, give me the desire to intercede for others. Amen

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 33

Psalm 31:9-16

Sixth Friday of Lent

Love Your Enemies

The Bible reminds us in Matthew 5:44, “But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” The Bible also reminds us that the enemy and evil never win (Psalm 37:1-3). (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

Psalm 37:1-3

Key Passages:

1 John 4:19-21 – “We love because he first loved us. Those who say, ‘I love God,’ and hate their brothers or sisters are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.”

Fasting Thought:

Man is created in the image of God and God is love. Jesus told the Pharisees in Matthew 22:37-38, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” Loving your neighbor includes loving your enemies. (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer:

O Lord, I have confidence and trust that you will deliver me from the hands of my enemies. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 34

Mark 10:32-34

Sixth Saturday of Lent

The Resurrection

To understand the magnitude of the Resurrection, one must grasp that the Resurrection is essential to the Christian faith. Without the Resurrection, there is no need for you to act on your faith. Without the Resurrection, your faith is meaningless, and our preaching is pointless. Without the Resurrection, we could not place our hope in a glorious future. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is central to the Christian Faith. We serve a risen Savior, who bore our infirmities and was wounded for our transgressions. Death could not keep Christ in the grave. (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

Revelation 21:1-8

Key Passages:

John 2:19 – “Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.’”

Fasting Thought:

Prior to his crucifixion, Jesus prepared his disciples for his departure. He told them in parable form that his body would be destroyed (earthly death); however, in three days he would rise from the grave. Jesus assured them that they had a glorious future to look forward to that was beyond the grave. (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer:

O Lord, the Resurrection proves that our sins have been paid in full, and we are granted eternal life. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 35

John 12:1-11

Sixth Monday of Lent

Agape Love

I see Mary as a model for us as believers. I serve the Lord because, like Mary, I want to please Jesus. I want to preach, teach, and live God's Word before humanity. My motivation in serving Christ is that God loved me so much that God sacrificed his only son for me. Jesus took my sins on the cross to reconcile me to God. I don't know of any human beings – except my parents – that could display this type of agape love. Love for Christ should be the motivation in all we do. Jesus is more than worthy for me to devote my life and service to the Kingdom of God. *(Bishop Sharma Lewis)*

Scripture Reading:

John 3:16

Key Passages:

1 John 5:11-12 – “And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

Fasting Thought:

God created man to spend eternity with him. However, when man sinned this became impossible because sin separates God from man. This caused God to grieve for man because of his “agape love” he has for man. God loved man so much that he gave his only Son to save man through his suffering, death, and resurrection. *(Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams)*

Prayer:

O Lord, I'm so glad you sacrificed for me. Let my love and service be a witness to humanity. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 36

Psalm 71:1-14

Sixth Tuesday of Lent

The Mothers of Brannen Chapel

In Psalm 71:1-8, the older psalmist describes how God has been his constant source of strength and protection. He recognizes that God has been with him, guiding him since birth. He acknowledges that God has always remained faithful throughout his years. The “Mothers of Brannen Chapel” would share stories about their faithful journey with God. Mrs. Amanda Smith often said, “If you’re going to trust anyone, why not trust God?” She assured me that a relationship with Jesus Christ is what everyone needs and that the Lord will fight all your battles! (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

Psalms 78:4

Key Passages:

2 Timothy 1:3-5 – “I am grateful to God – whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did – when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you.”

Fasting Thought:

Generational stories are so important in the upbringing of the next generation. Stories that your parents tell, who received them from their parents, who received them from their parents, and so on. These stories are sometimes the glue that hold families together. God told the Israelites to continue to tell their story to each generation so that as Psalm 78:7 says, “they would not forget the works of God and they would keep his commandments.” (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer:

O Lord, I am never too old to serve You! Let me continue to put my trust in You. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 37

John 13: 21-32

Sixth Wednesday of Lent

Betrayal

Have you ever been betrayed by a family member, friend, or significant other? The answer, of course, is probably yes! Anytime this question is asked, the betrayal of Jesus by Judas comes to mind. Betrayal is the sense of being harmed by intentional actions or omissions of a trusted person. According to psychologists, there are three ways to handle betrayal. First, you must forgive the person who betrayed you. Secondly, you must work to repair the relationship. And lastly, you must avoid future problems of betrayal by setting clear boundaries. *(Bishop Sharma Lewis)*

Scripture Reading:

Matthew 26:20-30

Key Passages:

Matthew 17:22 – “As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, ‘The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands.’”

Fasting Thought:

As Jesus was preparing his disciples for what was to come, he spoke to them about betrayal. Can you imagine the shock, doubts, and bewildered looks that the disciples had as Jesus was talking to them about someone within their circle betraying him? Sadly, betrayal happens quite a lot between family members, friends, co-workers, neighbors, etc. *(Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams)*

Prayer:

O Lord, please help me to forgive the person who betrayed me. Help me to reconcile with the person I betrayed. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 38

John 13:1-17; 31b-35

Maundy Thursday

Servanthood

The Bible displays many examples of servanthood. Of course, the primary theme of the Bible is the greatest servant, Jesus Christ. Scripture gives us many examples of Jesus modeling servanthood. My favorite scripture is found in Mark 10:45, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." All believers are called to servanthood ministry.

Therefore, we are called to serve others for the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God.
(*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

Philippians 2:1-5

Key Passages:

Isaiah 53:4-6 – "Surely, he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Fasting Thought:

The above passage, a part of the "Suffering Servant" described by Isaiah, is the perfect "Servant" who understood his assignment of being a true "Servant" for the Lord. This "Servant" suffered on the behalf of mankind so that man could have life eternal. He bore all our iniquities, transgressions, and infirmities. He made it possible for man to be forgiven and saved from their sins. (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer:

O Lord, teach me how to follow our examples of serving others. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 39

Psalm 22

Good Friday

After God's Own Heart

David loved God because God protected him when he faced Goliath and other enemies. David loved God by putting his faith into action, as he was known to be “after God’s own heart.” Jesus loved God because he was the Son of God, fully human and fully divine. Jesus loved God because he chose to suffer at Calvary as a sign of his love and obedience to the will of God. David and Jesus both called on God for deliverance from their troubles. (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

Deuteronomy 31:6

Key Passages:

2 Timothy 1:6-7 – “For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of fear, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.”

Fasting Thought:

Have you ever been afraid to share your testimony? We hear these words all the time, “You know, everyone goes through something. It may not be now, but it’s coming.” That “something” is your testimony. It is your “test,” that you are to share with someone else. Oftentimes, we find ourselves ashamed or embarrassed by our testimonies (bankruptcies, foreclosures, certain illnesses, life situations, etc.), and we refuse to share due to fear. When God send someone your way who needs to hear your story, he will let you know when you are to be that “saving witness” for that person. And remember, “God did not give us the spirit of fear, but the Lord has given us power!!!! (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer:

O Lord, you suffered on the cross to reconcile me to God. Amen

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.



Day 40

John 19:38-42

Holy Saturday

Interment

I have always felt that the last portion of a funeral or memorial service, known as the “interment,” is the most sacred moment for families and friends to help bring closure to the loved one’s death. I remember as a child – and now as a clergyperson – walking through the cemetery reading the various headstone epitaphs. As I would read, I could picture the person because epitaphs tell a short story about the deceased. I saw words like, “Devoted Father,” “Beautiful Lady,” “Never Stop Singing,” “Step Softly,” “A Dream Lies Here,” and “She Was One Who Followed Dreams and Stars.” I always felt a sense of peace and an air of sadness when I would walk around the cemetery. (*Bishop Sharma Lewis*)

Scripture Reading:

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

Key Passages:

Isaiah 57:1-2 – “The righteous perish, and no one takes it to heart; the devout are taken away while no one understands. For the righteous are taken away from calamity, and they enter into peace; those who walk uprightly will rest on their couches.”

Fasting Thought:

It is hard when a loved one dies. It is hard for us to imagine what happens with the human body because as humans, we think about the science of things when one dies. If our loved one was afraid of the dark, we think they would be so alone and scared. If the weather is not perfect, we think that they will be too hot or too cold or they may get wet when it rains, etc. It is hard to imagine life without them because as humans we think they were not supposed to go and leave us and how much we are going to miss them. And we also wonder, where are they...are they singing among that heavenly choir; are they sitting before God’s throne in worship; are they wearing wings and assigned as my guardian angel? God tells us in Isaiah 57:2 that “they are at rest.” Just as those heroes and sheroes of faith are still waiting to be made “perfect” because they too have not yet received the promise but instead are still our cloud of witnesses, we will all be at rest until God’s trumpet sound (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). (*Pastor Linda Lindsey-Williams*)

Prayer:

O Lord, when I am laid to rest, let my light so shine before men, women, and children. Amen.

Take a few moments to journal what God has taught you today.