



# Lenten Devotional

2023

# INTRODUCTION

Lent is about the glory, humility, and sufficiency of Jesus as demonstrated in His atoning work on the cross.

Observed by many churches around the world throughout many centuries, Lent is the season in which the church narrows in and focuses on the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ for the purpose of continuing to die to sin and live to Christ.

It is the period of time in the church calendar that begins on what is traditionally known as “Ash Wednesday” and lasts for the 40 days (excluding Sundays) leading up to Easter. This year Lent begins on February 22.

While observing the season of Lent is not mandated in Scripture, the practices many Christians give themselves to this time of year are biblical. Like Advent, it is a season which many Christians have found that they can leverage for the good of their own discipleship as they give themselves to deeper prayer, Bible study, fasting, other forms of self-denial, and service.

## HOW TO USE THIS DEVOTIONAL

This devotional is meant to help us focus on who Jesus is and what He did in His life, death and resurrection. We do not want Lent to be merely about self-denial, but about filling our minds and hearts with the truth of the gospel of grace so that we might more fully rest in, delight in, and worship our rescuing God.

To that end, the weeks of Lent leading up to Easter are divided into seven. Beginning with February 22, each week provides a weekly Bible reading guide that will lead you through all of Leviticus which has 27 chapters and Hebrews which has 13 chapters, reading one chapter a day. Sundays are meant to be days to reflect on what has been previously read and to catch up on any reading you have missed. The goal is to dig deep into God’s Word.

For each week we have also provided the lyrics of a relevant song and the selection of a quote related to the cross of Christ. We hope these will provide further opportunity for you to reflect on the enormous truth of Good Friday and Easter.

Finally, as you walk through each week of Lent, we encourage you to engage in some sort of fast. Consider abstaining from something that is permissible for you, but that you think is genuinely detrimental to your walk with Christ. Or even something that has just become inordinately consuming in your life. For example:

- television and movies
- social networking or the internet
- video games
- shopping for nonessentials
- caffeine
- sweets
- or perhaps even sleep to a degree.

However, don't just give up something; every time you would do or consume or use whatever you have given up, capture the opportunity to remember that Jesus is better than anything we might give up temporarily. Say a quick prayer – thanking God for how good He is and asking him to break the power that these things have over you, your time, and your affections.

# A FEW WORDS OF CAUTION

For all the benefit that observing the season of Lent can bring, it would also be wise for us to recognize that such observances have been abused in the past. Thus, perhaps a few words of caution are in order.

**Be cautious of pride** – any time we give ourselves to taking intentional steps to grow in the Lord becomes an opportunity for sin to ironically rear its ugly head and build in us a self-righteousness that looks down on others. Beware of pride.

**Be cautious of false spirituality** – if Lenten practices are simply done as ends in themselves, they can actually lead us away from Christ as they give only “an appearance of wisdom” (Colossians 2:23). Rather, in all that you do, set your heart on Christ and the new identity you have in Him (Colossians 3:1-4). Beware of simply trying to look spiritual.

**Be cautious of minimizing** – the reality is that every Christian is called “daily” to “deny himself” and “take up his cross” in order to “follow” Christ (Luke 9:23). A focus on these things over a 40-day period can potentially minimize the fact that we should be wholehearted in our devotion to Christ every day of every year. Beware of diminishing the importance of daily taking up your cross.

**Be cautious of superficiality** – sadly, what Lent boils down to for some is giving up something relatively insignificant to them with relatively little thought – such as chocolate or wine – and often more out of a concern for calories or health than for Jesus. Beware of trivializing Lent.

As we move towards Easter, may the Lord use this season to recalibrate our lives and reorient our desires so that we may more fully live for and love the Lord Jesus Christ.

# SEARCHER OF HEARTS,

*It is a good day to me when thou givest me a glimpse of myself;*

*Sin is my greatest evil,*

*but thou art my greatest good;*

*I have cause to loathe myself,*

*and not to seek self-honour,*

*for no one desires to commend his dunghill.*

*My country, family, church*

*fare worse because of my sins,*

*for sinners bring judgment in thinking sins are small,*

*or that God is not angry with them.*

*Let me not take other good men as my example,*

*and think I am good because I am like them,*

*For all good men are not so good as thou desirest,*

*are not always consistent,*

*do not always follow holiness,*

*do not feel good in sore affliction.*

*Show me how to know when a thing is evil*

*which I think is right and good,*

*how to know when what is lawful*

*comes from an evil principle,*

*such as desire for reputation or wealth by usury.*

*Give me grace to recall my needs,*

*my lack of knowing thy will in Scripture,*

*of wisdom to guide others,*

*of daily repentance, want of which keeps thee at bay,*

*of the spirit of prayer, having words without love*

*of zeal for thy glory, seeking my own ends,*

*of joy in thee and thy will,*

*of love to others.*

*And let me not lay my pipe*

*too short of the fountain,*

*never touching the eternal spring,*

*never drawing down water from above.*

PRAYER FROM "THE VALLEY OF VISION"

# WEEK ONE

February 22 to 26

## DAILY READING PLAN

February 22 (The First Day of Lent – Ash Wednesday): Leviticus 1

February 23: Leviticus 2

February 24: Hebrews 1

February 25: Leviticus 3

February 26: Sunday (reflect, rest, and catch up)

## SUGGESTED FAST

See page 2 for a list of suggested fasts. Choose one for the week. Remember: don't just give up something; every time you would do or consume or use whatever you have given up, capture the opportunity to remember that Jesus is better than anything we might give up temporarily. Say a quick prayer – thanking God for how good He is and asking him to break the power that these things have over you, your time, and your affections.

## REFLECTION & RESPONSE



## PRAYER

O God, who before the passion of your only-begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant to us that we, beholding by faith the light of his countenance, may be strengthened to bear our cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

*The Book of Common Prayer*

## SONG: “COME YE SINNERS, POOR AND NEEDY”

Come, ye sinners, poor and needy	Come, ye thirsty, come and welcome
Weak and wounded, sick and sore	God's free bounty glorify
Jesus ready, stands to save you	True belief and true repentance
Full of pity, love and power	Every grace that brings you nigh

I will arise and go to Jesus	Come, ye weary, heavy-laden
He will embrace me in His arms	Lost and ruined by the fall
In the arms of my dear Savior	If you tarry 'til you're better
Oh, there are ten thousand charms	You will never come at all

I will arise and go to Jesus  
He will embrace me in His arms  
In the arms of my dear Savior  
Oh, there are ten thousand charms

## REFLECT

Words: Joseph Hart, 1759; Music: William Walker, 1835

If anything has been lost from our culture, it is the idea that human beings are privately, personally, individually, ultimately, inexorably accountable to God for their lives.

— R. C. Sproul, *The Truth of the Cross*

# WEEK TWO

February 27 to March 5

## DAILY READING PLAN

February 27: Leviticus 4

February 28: Hebrews 2

March 1: Leviticus 5

March 2: Hebrews 3

March 3: Leviticus 6

March 4: Leviticus 7

Marcy 5: Sunday (reflect, rest, and catch up)

## SUGGESTED FAST

See page 2 for a list of suggested fasts. Choose one for the week. Remember: don't just give up something; every time you would do or consume or use whatever you have given up, capture the opportunity to remember that Jesus is better than anything we might give up temporarily. Say a quick prayer – thanking God for how good He is and asking him to break the power that these things have over you, your time, and your affections.

## REFLECTION & RESPONSE



## PRAYER

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan; Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

*The Book of Common Prayer*

## SONG: “O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus”

O the deep, deep love of Jesus,  
vast, unmeasured, boundless, free,  
rolling as a mighty ocean  
in its fullness over me.

Underneath me, all around me,  
is the current of Thy love;  
leading onward, leading homeward  
to thy glorious rest above.

O the deep, deep love of Jesus,  
spread His praise from shore to shore!  
How He loveth, ever loveth,  
changeth never, nevermore!

How He watcheth o'er His loved ones,  
died to call them all His own;  
how for them He intercedeth,  
watcheth o'er them from the throne.

O the deep, deep love of Jesus,  
love of ev'ry love the best;  
'tis an ocean vast of blessing,  
'tis a haven sweet of rest.

O the deep, deep love of Jesus,  
'tis heav'n of heav'ns to me;  
and it lifts me up to glory,  
for it lifts me up to Thee

Words: Samuel Francis, 1875; Music: Thomas John Williams 1890

## REFLECT

If the cross is to mark our Christian life in the home and the church, this should be even more so in the world. The church tends to become very pre-occupied with its own affairs, obsessed with petty, parochial trivia, while the needy world outside is waiting. So the Son sends us out into the world, as the Father had sent him into the world.

— John Stott, *The Cross of Christ*

# WEEK THREE

March 6 to 12

## DAILY READING PLAN

March 6: Leviticus 8

March 7: Hebrews 4

March 8: Leviticus 9

March 9: Hebrews 5

March 10: Leviticus 10

March 11: Leviticus 11

March 12: Sunday (reflect, rest, and catch up)

## SUGGESTED FAST

See page 2 for a list of suggested fasts. Choose one for the week. Remember: don't just give up something; every time you would do or consume or use whatever you have given up, capture the opportunity to remember that Jesus is better than anything we might give up temporarily. Say a quick prayer – thanking God for how good He is and asking him to break the power that these things have over you, your time, and your affections.

## REFLECTION & RESPONSE

## PRAYER

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy:  
Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways,  
and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast  
faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable  
truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son;  
who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

*The Book of Common Prayer*

## SONG: “Alas, and Did My Savior Bleed”

Alas! and did my Savior bleed?	Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And did my Sov'reign die,	And shut his glories in,
Would He devote that sacred head	When the incarnate Maker died
For such a worm as I?	For man, His creature's sin.

Was it for sins that I had done	Thus might I hide my blushing face
He groaned upon the tree?	While His dear cross appears
Amazing pity! grace unknown!	Dissolve my heart in thankfulness,
And love beyond degree!	And melt mine eyes to tears.

But drops of grief can ne'er repay  
The debt of love I owe;  
Here Lord, I give myself away:  
'Tis all that I can do

Words: Isaac Watts, 1707; Music: Irish Traditional,  
arranged by Annie Quick

## REFLECT

The cross calls us to a much more radical and costly kind of evangelism than most churches have begun to consider, let alone experience. The cross calls us to social action too, because it summons us to the imitation of Christ...

— John Stott, *The Cross of Christ*

# WEEK FOUR

March 13 to 19

## DAILY READING PLAN

March 13: Leviticus 12

March 14: Hebrews 6

March 15: Leviticus 13

March 16: Hebrews 7

March 17: Leviticus 14

March 18: Leviticus 15

March 19: Sunday (reflect, rest, and catch up)

## SUGGESTED FAST

See page 2 for a list of suggested fasts. Choose one for the week. Remember: don't just give up something; every time you would do or consume or use whatever you have given up, capture the opportunity to remember that Jesus is better than anything we might give up temporarily. Say a quick prayer – thanking God for how good He is and asking him to break the power that these things have over you, your time, and your affections.

## REFLECTION & RESPONSE

## PRAYER

Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

*The Book of Common Prayer*

## SONG: “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded”

O sacred Head, now wounded,  
with grief and shame weighed down,  
now scornfully surrounded  
with thorns, Thine only crown.  
O sacred Head, what glory,  
what bliss till now was Thine!  
Yet, though despised and gory,  
I joy to call Thee mine.

What language shall I borrow  
to thank Thee, dearest Friend,  
for this, Thy dying sorrow,  
Thy pity without end?  
O make me Thine forever!  
And should I fainting be,  
Lord, let me never, never,  
outlive my love for Thee.

What Thou, my Lord, hast suffered  
was all for sinners' gain;  
mine, mine was the transgression,  
but Thine the deadly pain.  
Lo, here I fall, my Savior!  
'Tis I deserve Thy place;  
look on me with Thy favor,  
vouchsafe to me Thy grace.

Be near when I am dying,  
O show Thy cross to me!  
And, for my succor flying,  
come, Lord, to set me free.  
These eyes, new faith receiving,  
from Thee shall never move;  
for he who dies believing  
dies safely in Thy love.

## REFLECT

Words: Bernard of Clairvaux, 1153; Music: Hanns Hassler, 1601

I wonder whether Jesus was even aware of the nails and the thorns. He was overwhelmed by the outer darkness. On the cross, He was in hell, totally bereft of the grace and the presence of God, utterly separated from all blessedness of the Father. He became a curse for us so that we one day will be able to see the face of God. God turned His back on His Son so that the light of His countenance will fall on us. It's no wonder Jesus screamed from the depths of His soul.

— R. C. Sproul, *The Truth of the Cross*

# WEEK FIVE

March 20 to 26

## DAILY READING PLAN

March 20: Leviticus 16

March 21: Hebrews 8

March 22: Leviticus 17

March 23: Hebrews 9

March 24: Leviticus 18

March 25: Leviticus 19

March 26: Sunday (reflect, rest, and catch up)

## SUGGESTED FAST

See page 2 for a list of suggested fasts. Choose one for the week. Remember: don't just give up something; every time you would do or consume or use whatever you have given up, capture the opportunity to remember that Jesus is better than anything we might give up temporarily. Say a quick prayer – thanking God for how good He is and asking him to break the power that these things have over you, your time, and your affections.

## REFLECTION & RESPONSE

## PRAYER

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

*The Book of Common Prayer*

## SONG: “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”

When I survey the wondrous cross  
on which the Prince of glory died,  
my richest gain I count but loss,  
and pour contempt on all my pride.

See, from his head, his hands, his feet,  
sorrow and love flow mingled down.  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast  
save in the death of Christ, my God!  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them through his blood.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
that were a present far too small.  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
demands my soul, my life, my all.

Words: Isaac Watts, 1707; Music: HAMBURG, Lowell Mason, 1824

## REFLECT

Life is wasted if we do not grasp the glory of the cross, cherish it for the treasure that it is, and cleave to it as the highest price of every pleasure and the deepest comfort in every pain. What was once foolishness to us—a crucified God—must become our wisdom and our power and our only boast in this world.

—John Piper, *Don't Waste Your Life*

# WEEK SIX

March 27 to April 2

## DAILY READING PLAN

March 27: Leviticus 20

March 28: Hebrews 10

March 29: Leviticus 21

March 30: Hebrews 11

March 31: Leviticus 22

April 1: Leviticus 23

April 2: Palm Sunday (reflect, rest, and catch up)

## SUGGESTED FAST

See page 2 for a list of suggested fasts. Choose one for the week. Remember: don't just give up something; every time you would do or consume or use whatever you have given up, capture the opportunity to remember that Jesus is better than anything we might give up temporarily. Say a quick prayer – thanking God for how good He is and asking him to break the power that these things have over you, your time, and your affections.

## REFLECTION & RESPONSE

## PRAYER

Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

*The Book of Common Prayer*

## SONG: “Rock of Ages”

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
let me hide myself in thee;  
let the water and the blood,  
from thy wounded side which flowed,  
be of sin the double cure;  
save from wrath and make me pure.

Nothing in my hand I bring,  
simply to the cross I cling;  
naked, come to thee for dress;  
helpless, look to thee for grace;  
foul, I to the fountain fly;  
wash me, Savior, or I die.

Not the labors of my hands  
can fulfill thy law's demands;  
could my zeal no respite know,  
could my tears forever flow,  
all for sin could not atone;  
thou must save, and thou alone.

While I draw this fleeting breath,  
when mine eyes shall close in death,  
when I soar to worlds unknown,  
see thee on thy judgment throne,  
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
let me hide myself in thee.

Words: Augustus M. Toplady, 1776; Music: TOPLADY,  
Thomas Hastings, 1830

## REFLECT

God could quite justly have abandoned us to our fate. He could have left us alone to reap the fruit of our wrongdoing and to perish in our sins. It is what we deserved. But he did not. Because he loved us, he came after us in Christ. He pursued us even to the desolate anguish of the cross, where he bore our sins, guilt, judgment and death. It takes a hard and stony heart to remain unmoved by love like that.

— John Stott, *The Cross of Christ*

# WEEK SEVEN | HOLY WEEK

April 3 to 9

## DAILY READING PLAN

April 3: Leviticus 24

April 4: Hebrews 12

April 5: Leviticus 25

April 6: Hebrews 13

April 7: Leviticus 26

April 8: Leviticus 27

April 9: Easter Sunday! (rest, reflect, and catch up with particular reflection on Heb. 13:20-21)

## SUGGESTED FAST

See page 2 for a list of suggested fasts. Choose one for the week. Remember: don't just give up something; every time you would do or consume or use whatever you have given up, capture the opportunity to remember that Jesus is better than anything we might give up temporarily. Say a quick prayer – thanking God for how good He is and asking him to break the power that these things have over you, your time, and your affections.

## REFLECTION & RESPONSE

## PRAYER

O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life: Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ, that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

### The Book of Common Prayer

#### SONG: “The Power of the Cross”

Oh, to see the dawn  
Of the darkest day:  
Christ on the road to Calvary.  
Tried by sinful men,  
Torn and beaten, then  
Nailed to a cross of wood.

This, the pow’r of the cross:  
Christ became sin for us;  
Took the blame, bore the wrath—  
We stand forgiven at the cross.

Oh, to see the pain  
Written on Your face,  
Bearing the awesome weight of sin.  
Ev’ry bitter thought,  
Ev’ry evil deed  
Crowning Your bloodstained brow.

Now the daylight flees;  
Now the ground beneath  
Quakes as its Maker bows His head.  
Curtain torn in two,  
Dead are raised to life;  
”Finished!” the vict’ry cry.

Oh, to see my name  
Written in the wounds,  
For through Your suffering I am free.  
Death is crushed to death;  
Life is mine to live,  
Won through Your selfless love.

This, the pow’r of the cross:  
Son of God—slain for us.  
What a love! What a cost!  
We stand forgiven at the cross.

Words and Music: Keith Getty and Stuart Townend, 2005

## REFLECT

Christ's salvation is of such a kind that it expresses the ultimate reality of guilt and exposes it in all its stark actuality. It exposes it in terms of the wrath of God, but at the same time manifests in the midst of it all the infinite and overwhelming love of God, and enacts the union of God and man in a union and communion that nothing can undo.

In forgiveness Jesus Christ offers himself on behalf of and in the place of the sinner, and the gulf of human sin and guilt is spanned, but in throwing a bridge over the abyss, the depth and breadth of it are made still more evident. That is why Golgotha casts such a dark shadow over the world. That is why the cross unmasks the inhumanity of man, at once exposing sin and guilt and dealing with them at their worst — in mankind's ultimate attack upon God in Jesus Christ — and out of the heart of that there come two words that reveal the infinite guilt of humanity and the infinite love of God.

'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'

'Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.'

— T. F. Torrance, *Incarnation: The Person and Life of Christ*



Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, fresco transferred to canvas from the hermitage of St. Baudelius of Berlanga (Soria), Indianapolis Museum of Art.

# NOTES

# CHRIST CHURCH NYC

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## *Lenten Devotional*

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All Bible verses are taken from the  
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Christ Church NYC  
Sundays, 10:00am  
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