



This is a Forty (40) Day Lenten Devotional prepared by the men and women of Dayspring Wesleyan Church.

The purpose of Lent is for reflecting on one's spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. The Lenten Season is a time of repentance, praise, worship, reading the Bible, and prayer as we prepare our hearts for the Easter celebration..

We are offering this devotional to assist in your 40 days of reflection. Would you prayerfully commit to reading a devotion each day and spend some quiet time with Jesus Christ?

This devotional has been prepared by many people of various ages and backgrounds at Dayspring. The wisdom of these people may be exactly what you may need to hear during these 40 days of Lent. Read with an open mind and see the unique perspectives of those sitting around you at Dayspring.

Thank you to each person or couple who wrote a devotion. You matter at Dayspring and to those who are the church at Dayspring.

Thank you to the Dayspring staff for their vision and humility in preparing this devotional.

Thank you to our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ. May we steadfastly praise him above all else in 2021. He has given each of us abilities to help and support one another, and we are eternally grateful for the many gifts he bestows upon us as believers, disciples, and as a church.

Day 1 - February 24

Read: Genesis 9:12

God promises that he will never flood the earth-sounds pretty straight forward and simple, right? Well, not exactly. Yes, he is promising to never flood the earth again, but he is also trying to show us something more. Through the flood, he has reset and renewed the earth. He basically gave us a second chance. I don't know about you, but when God gives me a second chance then I am going to take it. To top it all off, he says that the rainbow will be a reminder to us that God is faithful, loving, and will keep his promise to us.

Life can be really hard sometimes. We lose people we love, or we go through trauma that changes how we think and how we see the world, and it can be so hard to get past these things. But, what I think God is trying to communicate in this verse is he is teaching us about trust. Even when we hit the really low times in our life, we still have to trust in God because he is the only one who can bring us through the pain. Every good relationship begins with trust. As believers, we are called to trust that a God who is all powerful that created this world and us will not only bring us through the pain but will help us flourish into strong believers. However, to get there, you must first trust that when God promised to renew the world, he also promised to renew you and give you the second chance he believes we deserve.

Isabella Hilligoss

Day 2 - February 25

Read: Genesis 15:1, 7

You are going through Lent, so congratulations on your second day! Don't worry, after a week, it will become easier to pass on what you gave up.

With this verse that was provided today, I want to share how it pertains to me in my life and how it can pertain to you in yours. I love and am very passionate about the sport of football. I've been playing since I was 6, but I haven't always been able to connect God with football. I even started to put football over God.

In these verses it says, "I am your shield, your very great reward." When I read this verse at the beginning of my middle school football season, I realized that God will protect me, in mind and body, on the football field and in life. So, I made a change, and I put God back above football. Therefore, he became my shield.

You see, God will protect you through this trial of Lent, because the act of giving something up is just as important to him as it is to you. He wants to help you through this, and he wants to be your shield. All you have to do is ask him. "God help me. Help me put this challenge behind me and be my protector, because you are an amazing God."

Thanks for reading this, and my prayer is that you will not give up on this trial.

Joey Bradac

Day 3 - February 26

Read: Genesis 17:1

As Christians, all of us at some point have had an encounter with God. Whether you were saved at a young age or came to God later in life, it makes no difference when you came. The point is that you left the encounter changed.

Anytime we have an encounter with God should be a catalyst for change in our lives, including meeting with him at church on Sundays.

In the scripture today, we read about one of Abram's encounters with God. God had already called him to leave his country and his home and follow him back in chapter 12. Now, in chapter 17, God is reinforcing the promise he made to Abram to make him a "father of many nations" (verse 5).

One of the signs of this promise was when God changes Abram's name to Abraham and Sarai's name to Sarah. This is an outward symbol to people around them that a change has taken place. They had an encounter with God, and they left changed.

As believers, there should be outward signs to those around us of our faith. When we become saved, we are to "put off your old self...and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4: 22-24). 1 Peter 1:16 reminds us to be holy because God is holy. To be holy simply means to be set apart.

What are we doing to show that we have truly been changed? Don't walk away from an encounter with the Lord the same as when you came to him. Let it show! Love those around you, live a life of integrity and be set apart for him.

Rachel Osborne

Day 4 - February 27

Read: Genesis 26:24

This verse is the second time we read that God has appeared to Isaac. It can be broken down into three parts. The first part is God establishing his authority over Isaac. Isaac grew up watching his father develop a spiritual relationship with God. The God of his father is now becoming his God.

The second part is a command to not be afraid because God is with him. Many times in the midst of our troubles, it can be hard to see God because we allow our fears to get out of control. When our fears become too big, it successfully renders us useless for the kingdom of God.

The final statement is a promise from God. God had made a similar promise to Abraham, and here, he makes the promise to Isaac. God is using this passage to move Isaac along his own faith journey. Instead of hearing about God from his father, Abraham, he needed to encounter God for himself. Isaac needed God's reassurance that he was still with him, even after Abraham had passed away.

Looking over your own life, don't you sometimes need God to reassure you too? Reflecting on the truth, we learn in this verse we can ask ourselves some very important questions to help us grow spiritually during this season of Lent. Have I recognized God's authority over all my life or are there parts that I still need to surrender to him? Sometimes, we surrender an area and then something will draw us back and we'll need to surrender it again. Think of it like layers of an onion. What fears in my life are preventing me from seeing God with me in my situation? Finally, what promises of God can I hang onto when I am struggling?

Becky Bradac

Day 5 - February 28

Read: Genesis 28:15

God will not leave me, and God will not leave you. God will never leave nor forsake his community of people. God loves you more than you can ever imagine. This almost seems crazy because that deep love is not only individualistic, but it is community-spread love through the vast nations.

We may forget about God in times of our life, pushing him aside, thinking we can do this life on our own strength. God wants us to come back to him and to who he created us to be. The sovereign, loving God will not let myself or any of you down. May we continually be reminded that he is with us, he will watch over us wherever we go, and he will bring us back home if we wander. He is still speaking and working today. Are we taking time to wait, be still and know that he is God?

Dear Father, I just want to pray that your spirit would intercede on behalf of us. We know that even when we don't see you working, you are there at work. You never stop working because that is who you are. That is the God we serve. We thank and praise you for that truth!

Blake Dennis

Day 6 - March 1

Read: Exodus 3:6, 14

In order to be a true Christian, we have to accept God for who he is. The reality is that God is who he says he is. Absolute and infinite, the beginning and the end. Too many times in our life we think that we are in charge only to find out how mortal and wrong we really are. Many of us operate with a God of our own conception. Our hope is in returning to God's word as written in the bible. How blessed we are to have such a powerful God as our savior. The creator of the universe is our source of inspiration, our father, and the one who never leaves us. This is the same God who sent his son to save us. He is the great "I am." How blessed we are!

Harold & Vickie Rorick

Day 7 - March 2

Read: Exodus 6:2

Did you know many scholars believe this is the first time God uses the term Lord (Yahweh) in the Bible? This is significant because it shows God revealing something about himself to Moses. For the first time, God is revealing his name to a person. He is deepening the relationship between Moses and himself by sharing an intimate revelation.

This comes not long after Moses experiences some pretty amazing moments with God (the burning bush and a series of miracles – read Exodus 3 -5 if you have time). This verse specifically comes at a time when Moses feels overwhelmed with the task before him.

How often have we been in the same place as Moses, in spite of the great things God has done in our lives? We find ourselves overwhelmed by the tasks in front of us and crying out for help. God stops Moses and shares an intimate moment with him. When you are feeling overwhelmed, do you let the gentle whisper of God, who is all-powerful, meet you for an intimate moment? Or do you miss it because you are only looking for him to show himself to you in big, extravagant ways?

The take away from this moment is the reminder that God wants you to know him, even if you aren't Moses and your job isn't to save God's people. He wants to lay his hand on your shoulder and whisper his name in your ear so you will know him deeply and more intimately.

Consider praying: "Father, thank you for wanting to share yourself with me. Help me stop, to trust in your promises, and listen to your voice. Amen."

Katie Isler

Day 8 - March 3

Read: Exodus 20:2

One of several definitions of slavery, in the form of a noun, is "one that is completely subservient to a dominating influence." As one takes into consideration the circumstances where this passage is found, the Israelites had recently been led out of 400 years of slavery in Egypt. Through Moses, God (I AM) had saved them from their suffering.

Although we cannot identify with the physical suffering of slavery the Israelites experienced during their bondage, we may know what it is like to yield to something that is dominating our time, thoughts or influence. Daily, we may be caught in the trap of negative thoughts, bitterness, or pride that keeps us from indulging in the love God has for us and wants us to share with others. It may be a distraction such as video games, tv, the internet, or a smartphone that monopolizes our time and prevents us from reading God's Word. Or it may be an unhealthy friendship that pressures us into making bad choices. We know all these areas are holding us back from receiving God's best for us but we just can't seem to quit. That is slavery.

Just as God led the Israelites out of bondage, he can do the same for us! He was and still is, I AM! By submitting our thoughts, time and relationships to him in prayer, by looking for his guidance in his word and by asking for his forgiveness, he will break those chains!

Melissa Barnett

Day 9 - March 4

Read: Exodus 23:20

11 years ago, we began a journey that we never dreamed we would ever experience. When Angie and I got married, we wanted nothing more than to begin a family and have a storybook life. For us, it seemed like someone took that page in our story, scribbled all over it with a black crayon and ripped it to shreds.

Over a seven-year period, we experienced difficulties including infertility, miscarriage, and the deaths of three of our children due to premature birth. We experienced many negative emotions during this time including feelings of failure, guilt, and anger. We could have very easily blamed each other for the failures we were experiencing and given up. However, it's amazing how God reveals himself to you through the difficult times when you think he is not there. Through all of this, we chose to put our trust in God and believe that he had a plan for us when others around us doubted that we would ever have children.

The turning point for us was after the loss of our son, Jace in 2014. Angie and I both had similar dreams of a little girl playing under a willow tree. This came to reality when we were deciding to purchase our first home. With a pen in our hands, ready to sign for the house we thought we wanted, the realtor received a message that there was another house that we may want to take a look at. Upon arriving at the house, it was everything we wanted and more, but what took the cake was stepping out into the backyard and seeing a towering willow tree firmly planted in its center. This is where God had been leading us during these long and dark seven years!

We became foster parents in this home and by surprise, Angie found out she was pregnant one morning, naturally without the help of fertility medication or any special procedures. We had a perfectly healthy baby girl we named Gracelyn. God was not done yet! 2 1/2 years later, we had a second baby girl we named Aralyn. We have no doubt that God sent his angel ahead of us to fulfill the dream we had of a family. He had already begun putting things in motion before we even wanted a family. God has an amazing plan for everyone even though at times it may not feel like it. He sends his angel ahead of you to clear the way and complete his amazing plan for the lives of everyone who loves him and puts their trust in him.

Andy & Angie Paul

Day 10 - March 5

Read: Exodus 29:46

What is your Egypt? What is God trying to bring you out of? Is it loneliness, illness, addiction, or weariness? It could be just wandering through life with no direction, no peace, or no satisfaction...you fill in the blank. God wants to be your God, he wants to dwell within you. You must trust God enough to tell him your needs. Pour out your heart to him without shame. Invite him in and make him a part of your life.

God is waiting on you to make a move so that he may dwell in you. Be still and ask God to take control of all your thoughts and actions. Ask him to reveal his power so you will know that he is the Lord God, who will and can bring you out of your Egypt.

Vicki Edler

Day 11 - March 6

Read: Exodus 31:13

Busy, busy, busy. I run around, always working, doing who knows what, and I never say "no." But, last year on March 18, Covid struck, and the governor shut down everything. I was scared of the virus, but most of all, I just didn't know what I was going to do. I can't just stop running and stay at home!

At first, it was awful for me. Anxiety hit, and I lived for the Governor's update every day at 2pm. Finally, God said to me, "Stop. What about me? It is our time, and I will help you." We turned off the negativity and became close to God through scripture, praying and diving into new devotions. Peace started coming over me, and I realized God wanted my attention.

I feel he could stop this virus anytime but chooses not to. God wants us to learn something from this.

The Sabbath is mentioned in the Old Testament 172 times. For me, the Sabbath just doesn't mean Sunday. It's spending time with God and resting intentionally in his word with him. We need to put God first and live joyfully close to him. He will direct you every step of the way (Proverbs 3:6).

Look at the creation story in Genesis 2:2-3. If God can rest a day after creating everything, then I know I can!

Tammy Snyder

Day 12 - March 7

Read: Leviticus 11:44

This last year, I got to the age where I had to break down and buy reading glasses. I could no longer keep moving books to the right angle where I could read. Glasses are new to me, but I can read things so much easier now. I think I should have done this much sooner. I've realized that the more you handle your glasses, the dirtier the lenses get. I would be trying to read an article through what seemed like a fog, but now I know that glasses need to be cleaned often if you want to have the best vision.

The statement that the Lord makes in Leviticus reminds us that God's holiness is a sight to see, and his holiness lights up the darkness around us. God talked about the idea of consecration because he knew from time to time we would need to cleanse the lens to see things more clearly. Consecration in the bible is the idea of washing both the outside and inside of a person so they would be entirely clean in every sense. This was an outward sign of an inward work that was being done.

I know the day I asked Christ to come into my life, I was changed and could see a whole new direction. I have to admit though, there are times when I let the world creep in and change the view. It's at those points when I need to consecrate or clean up some things so the direction doesn't get blurry.

Today, take a look at things in your life that might need cleaning up so you can see a clearer path.

Pastor Chuck Osborne

Day 13 - March 8

Read: Isaiah 41:10, 13

May 25, 1986: Hands Across America. On this date, 5 to 6.5 million Americans held hands for 15 minutes to form a continuous human chain across the United States to fight hunger and homelessness. When someone takes your hand, something special happens. You don't feel alone, and you know someone cares.

I was thinking of when our son was small, he would come and take hold of my hand. A child will take hold of our hand because they trust us to protect them. When they fall, our hands are a source of comfort and healing. We lead them to show them the way, and our hands also help them with a particular task.

To our heavenly father, we are his child. He wants to hold our hand to comfort, lead and help us in this faith journey with him. What are your fears, challenges and doubts? Nothing takes him by surprise. God is there, and there is no chance he will ever lose his grip on you!

John & Cheryl Schroeder

Day 14 - March 9

Read: Isaiah 42:8

Day in and day out, we as Christians are tempted with a number of idols (television, our phones, our jobs, etc). There is one idol though that we can't escape: time. Time, like all other idols, doesn't take a break. We can shut the television off, we can lay down our phone, we can say no to overtime at work, but time is constantly demanding our attention. We're constantly thinking about how there's only 24 hours in a day and how we are going to fit time in with God amongst all the other things we are making time for.

Instead of making time for God, we need to find ourselves making sure God is in everything we do. Colossians 3:23-24 states, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving." We need to remember that everything we do should be done with the Lord in mind. When you wake up in the morning, glorify God. You can spend your drive to work reflecting or spending time in prayer with the Lord. Open the Bible and read his word instead of your Facebook page. Find him and his wonderful works in the everyday life around you. God sacrificed everything for us; we need to stop finding time for God and make God our time. He, the great I AM, promised us eternal life, and in doing that, removed the idol we feel we cannot escape: time.

This Lenten season, as we prepare for Easter, how will you sacrifice your time for the Lord?

Zack & Hannah McAvoy

Day 15 - March 10

Read: Isaiah 44:6, 24

Wrap your mind around being worth \$110 billion. I get tickled when I get a check for \$110.00, but the net worth of Bill Gates is in a completely different stratosphere. Bill is a genius, but he didn't get there on his own. His high school used bake sale proceeds to buy his class a personal computer long before other schools had access. His high school also was across the street from a university which allowed him complete access to an advanced computer lab to experiment for countless hours each week. While in high school, he befriended another tech giant, Paul Allen, with whom he later founded Microsoft with.

Bill is nothing short of genius, but without a bake sale, access to an advanced computer lab and an early friendship, Bill may have simply been a genius IT guy and not worth \$110 billion.

*In Isaiah 44, God does two things: acknowledges how valuable Israel is ("Israel, whom I have chosen." v.1) and gently reminds them where their value comes from: "I **am** the first and I **am** the last; apart from me there is no God... I **am** the LORD, the Maker of all things, who stretches out the heavens, who spreads out the earth by myself" (v.6, 24).*

Let me rephrase: "I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God." Apart from God, there is no me, and there is no you. "I am the Lord, the Maker of all things," including me and including you.

Today's I am statement reminds us of our infinite worth—well beyond \$110 billion—because God made us. But, it also stands to keep us humble and grateful because great abilities, knowledge, skills, or wisdom are only ours because of who we came from to begin with.

Pastor Beau Hummel

Day 16 - March 11

Read: Isaiah 45:3, 5-6

I love how God speaks to us in such personal ways. The context that Isaiah was writing about in this passage was the coming of an anointed, conquering leader. Reading this verse out of that context and on its own reminded me of my life before coming to Christ. Growing up and into my late twenties, I was not a proclaimed Christian. I believed in God the creator, but I did not have a relationship with Jesus.

Later, I learned that we often see God as we relate to our own father. That was the case for me: God was there when I absolutely needed him, but he was otherwise distant and uninvolved. My parents divorced when I was four years old, so my home was broken. There were times in my young life when I believed my existence had to be a mistake and no one really wanted me. I did not realize it at the time, but God saw all of those tears, hurt, and anger. He also knew that when my parent's marriage fell apart, I would need grandparents who stepped in and helped play the role of nurturer and protector.

God protected me and redirected me when I was falling short and into sin. Once I became a Christian at the age of almost 30, I was able to look back and see all of the beautiful "treasures" that God had stored in secret places. He built me up and strengthened me in times that I wasn't even aware he was around! He still amazes me every time I think back of what he was doing and how differently my life could look now without him.

Sandy Nelson

Day 17 - March 12

Read: Isaiah 46:4

Have you ever been so weighed down by responsibility and the unknown that you simply forget how to make decisions? Stuck between what you should do, what you want to do, and what others want you to do? You feel like there is so much uncertainty in the future or in what has happened in the past that you become unable to move, stuck feeling like your arms are completely full of work, children, relationships, emotions, and fears.

God challenges us throughout Isaiah 46 to trust who he is and what he can do. He says in verses 10-11, "I make known the end from the beginning...what I have said, that I will bring about; what I have planned, that I will do". Take a breath and pretend you just dropped the weight of planning and hoping for more. Give him the weight of your work and the fear of missing opportunities. He knows the path you will take and he is already far ahead waiting for you to follow.

The Lord says in verse 10, "My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please". Take another breath and release your worry in relationships. Let your relationship with him fill your heart and mind. If you have weight you still bear, he will carry it. He is waiting for you to ask so he can take your weight, your pain, and your fears. Finally, in verse 4 he says, "I am he who will sustain you, I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you." If you find yourself weighed down by the stressors of this world, take hope in the thought that he has been and always will be stronger than any burden.

Justin & Ashley Marsh

Day 18 - March 13

Read: Isaiah 48:17

As a young child, my parents would direct the way they thought I should go: friends, dance lessons, cheerleading, and show choir. However, things began to change as I grew older and entered into my relationship with Jesus.

I started to pray and rely on Jesus to tell me what I should do and where I should go. Then, I went to college and decided to go into teaching which was something I wanted to do my entire life. As our college years came to an end, my husband and I got engaged. He began applying for jobs everywhere, even in California. I asked my husband what he thought about going to California. He said, "If the Lord calls us to California, then we are going to California." My reply was not appropriate, stating, "Well, the Lord is not calling me to California." Luckily, he didn't. However, through all of this, I realized that I was not truly letting the Lord direct my ways.

After my husband and I got married, I began to open up a little more to God and tried harder to follow his direction in my life. My job decisions were difficult over the years, but there was always a lesson I learned through them. My hardest lesson to learn was patience in waiting on the Lord and his direction. If I would choose to wait, God always knew what was best for me.

As a mother, I pray that I teach my kids to follow the Lord and let him guide them in what is best. In order to do this, I have to follow the Lord myself and set that example in my children's lives. I know that I have not always done this correctly, but it is never too late to start. Trust that the Lord knows what is best for you, and follow in the way that he leads.

Missy Smith

Day 19 - March 14

Read: Isaiah 51:15

Does anyone remember the comic strip, "BC?" This verse reminds me of a BC comic that I read a while ago. There was a caveman on his knees praying to God and asking God, "Where are you?" The first picture showed a flower growing while he was praying. The second picture showed a thunderstorm while he was praying. The third picture showed a volcano erupting while he was praying. The caveman stops praying and complains, "How can I pray with all these interruptions?"

We are given the opportunity to experience God on a daily basis. His creation surrounds us. Let's not get so caught up with our surroundings and with all the noise around us that we miss him in our everyday life. Look for him. Take a moment today to go outside and experience God.

Wes Osborne

Day 20 - March 15

Read: Jeremiah 1:8, 12

Jeremiah was a young man who doubted his capabilities. The Lord calls Jeremiah to be a "prophet to the nations" in this chapter, but Jeremiah states that he is too young to know how to speak. In other words, he exclaims, "Look I know you're the all-knowing and powerful God, but you have got to have the wrong guy. I mean come on, me?" As I read this, I think of all the times that the Lord has given me capabilities to say or do something, but I simply look at the situation and think that there has to be someone else who could intervene. Why would he even be calling me anyways?

The story doesn't stop there though. God answers by stating the above verses. It is not through Jeremiah's own capability that he will speak to the nations. Rather, the Lord has given him the gifts and is walking with him to every destination. God is sticking it out to the end with Jeremiah to "see that his word is fulfilled." Just like Jeremiah, we don't have to look at situations with denial and fear. God is watching, and he is with you. He will not call you to something and just leave you there to figure it out for yourself. God has presented you with the tools and gifts to use, and it is your decision to use them. His presence sustains in all circumstances.

Mercedes Smith

Day 21 - March 16

Read: Jeremiah 9:24

Have you ever searched Facebook trying to find an old friend you have lost touch with? As you scroll through Facebook profiles, it is interesting to see that many of us fall into the habit of using Facebook to highlight all the good things in our life. We might want to brag about what we have, what we do and where we go:

"Here is a picture of me looking glamorous!"

"Look at my perfect children or grandchildren!"

"Let me tell you what all I accomplished today!"

Not only does this kind of sharing create an unrealistic view of everyday life –after all, no one's life is perfect–but this boasting will almost always point others toward a person; the created rather than the creator.

The Bible tells us there is a boasting that is not sinful: boasting in the Lord. Boasting about God isn't simply bragging about our knowledge of God, but boasting of his flawless character, steadfast love, justice and righteousness! Fortunately, in his grace, he practices steadfast love toward us even while we are centered on ourselves. Let's find ways to point others toward him and not toward ourselves.

Janet Stiverson

Day 22 - March 17

Read: Jeremiah 15:20

Have you ever been at a time in your life when you felt as if the weight of the world was coming down on you? Maybe things weren't going well at work, you were having family issues, or you just had a major issue with your house and didn't know where you would get the money for repairs?

In this passage, Jeremiah is going through a time when he is having difficulties with his enemies, persecutors, and slanderers. He is pleading with God for mercy and relief. He complains that he finds little pleasure in his work. But, God calls him to cease from his distrust and return to work. He reassures him he will deliver him from his enemies. They will fight against him, but God is the victor!

God works in us in the same way that he did Jeremiah. If we put our trust in him, he will always provide. He does not promise we won't have difficulties, but promises to be with us through them. Matt. 28:20 says, "And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

It's not always easy, but you can give it all to God. Will you?

Dean Ebert

Day 23 - March 18

Read: Jeremiah 24:7

There are so many things in this world used to separate us from God. I believe one of the major things is the "am I" questions:

Am I a good enough husband/wife?

Am I strong enough?

Am I a good enough parent, son or daughter?

Am I a good enough Christian?

Am I enough?

When we ask these questions, we feel insecure, feel like failures, and feel alone. If we listen, I believe we can hear God gently tell us to "remember who I Am!"

I Am your strength when you are weak!

I Am the peace in the middle of your storm!

I Am your healing when you are broken!

I Am the father - you are my child!

I Am the light in the darkness!

I Am your joy in the hard times!

I Am your everything!

Unity can come when we are drawn to the great I Am for who he is and not what we are trying to be. We need to see him as our hope, not just any man. So, don't be separated but realize we are all broken and need forgiveness, love, and grace. We all need Jesus. That is when we can come together in the presence and power of God to see him move and to use us for his kingdom and glory. Our hearts can come together to lift and encourage each other in Christ. Then, we can know him as Lord and be his people.

Brian Schenk

Day 24 - March 19

Read: Jeremiah 30:11

It's hard not to get swept up in the fear of the current pandemic or the worry for the way our country handled this election season. Each day, I log in to social media and I see how much people have latched onto being afraid. Many have simply forgotten to love and to be kind! But, it is through all of this that I have remembered to hope.

Jesus assured us he is with us and WILL save us. I know that there is no need to be afraid of the current state of the world because "The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him" Nahum 1:7. He is good, he is sovereign, and he is in control. None of this is a surprise to him. If ever there was a time to be reminded of the goodness and faithfulness of Jesus, it's today.

Hollie Service

Day 25 - March 20

Read: Jeremiah 32:27 NIV, NLT, KJV

Jeremiah was sent by God to deliver a message to the stubborn, disobedient Israelites for their unrepentant sin; judgment was coming. Jeremiah was also known as the "weeping prophet," because for 40 years, he watched these idolatrous people make choices that grieved God. No matter what Jeremiah did or said, they just didn't listen. He felt alone, sad, rejected, and unsuccessful in changing them.

Jeremiah boldly writes the divinely inspired words of God, "I am the LORD, the God of all mankind, is anything too hard for me?"

Jeremiah wanted the people to see that God wanted to be first in their hearts. Jeremiah also wanted the people to see that God is majestic, omnipotent, and a God of justice and love. Jeremiah was hoping the people would understand that God would accomplish his plan, whether they understood it or not.

I often judge and fault the Israelites for not listening to God. However, I have to remind myself that in my brokenness and sinful nature, sometimes I act just like them. I sinfully want my will, not God's will for my life. Jeremiah also tells me in 17:9 that "the heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure, who can understand it?" In other parts of Jeremiah, he states I am "prone to wander."

Jeremiah's message could leave me sad and without hope, yet I know the God who says "repent and come to me." He not only calls me, he showed his deep love for me by sending his one and only son, Jesus Christ, to save me.

I have experienced and will boldly state today that "restoration follows brokenness." The day I repented of my sin and asked Jesus to be my savior and Lord of my life, my restoration began. On Christ the solid rock I stand! He is enough! Nothing is too hard for the God of ALL mankind. He is worthy, amen!

Colleen Fiant

Day 26 - March 21

Read: Ezekiel 16:59-63

How many times have you broken the covenant with God?

We have broken the covenant with God over and over, yet he still remains faithful. The Israelites broke God's covenant time and time again, yet God remains faithful. No matter how many times we fail, God's arms remain stretched out, receiving us in joy. God will never break his promise of salvation if we repent and turn to him. Our God shows us loyal love that remains faithful even when we fail, which is brought to life through Jesus. 2 Timothy 2:11-13 reminds us that God "will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself."

Reflect: What are you doing right now that requires repentance?

Go: Express your struggle to a close friend so that they can keep you accountable.

Pray: Lift up your struggles, thank God for his faithfulness, repent, and sit in silence to listen for what he might have to tell you.

Pastor Alex Workman

Day 27 - March 22

Read: Ezekiel 20:19

Let us not pass over the importance of the first statement in our verse today, because it brings insight into the nature of God. The first part is that God is Lord; that is to say, he is over everything that was, is, and will ever be. The profound aspect of that statement is that God is God. I know it might sound silly to say that, but how else do you describe the alpha and omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end (Revelation 22.13)?

Followed by that statement is the fact that the personal God, the Lord, wants to be YOUR God. The one who is greater than anything else desires to be in a relationship with us. God was in perfect relationship with his creation until the fall in the garden. Ever since then, God has been revealing himself to our world in hopes of capturing that perfect relationship. God revealed himself in the first testament to his people, Jesus came in the New Testament, and now we have the Holy Spirit to guide us. Jesus gave clarity and fulfillment to the laws we were to keep: love God and love others (Mark 12.30-31). God is saying, "I am not only the Lord, but your God; love me and show that love to others." If we follow these simple commands, we can begin to build a foundation on the one we call Lord.

Pastor Dylan Kelly

Day 28 - March 23

Read: Matthew 3:17

"I am well pleased." Man, just hearing those words can change an attitude! It can change your day or your whole week. "I am pleased" are words we long to hear. To understand the power of Matthew 3:17, think of who it would mean the most coming from? Bosses, colleagues, friends, family, parents, children? There are a number of people in our lives daily. Who jumps out at you? Who would instantly put a smile on your face with the words "I am well pleased?" Now, imagine hearing those words from God! It gives me goosebumps just thinking of it.

In this verse, it is God himself speaking about his son, Jesus. Jesus must have been beaming. God himself, God the father was proclaiming out loud for all to hear that Jesus is loved and that he is pleased with his work.

My prayer for you as you really look at this verse and let it seep into your heart and mind is this:

I pray for you to feel the love of God to be a powerful force in your life, that it impacts you in a way that changes you from the inside out. I want it to make you a different person. I want you to shed the old you and put on a new you. I pray that you can feel the words "I am pleased" coming straight from God's mouth to your heart and it impacts you like never before. I pray you live your life in a way that you have no doubt you will hear those words from him. I pray that when the day comes and you are looking God right in the eyes, he says to you "This is my son/daughter, whom I love; with him/her I am well pleased." In Jesus' name, Amen.

Teri Shipley

Day 29 - March 24

Read: Matthew 11:28-30

Does taking the yoke feel like one more thing in an already tiring list? Do you see the yoke as oppressive OR freeing? For me, I had trouble seeing God's yoke as anything but burdensome. Being raised in a very legalistic Christian home, there was such a long list of "dos and don'ts" (more don'ts).

The yoke of Jesus and living a Christian life did not seem to be "good news," and made me bristle a little (as it may you) until I was presented with the picture of what a yoke was and how it was used. A yoke was hand-carved out of wood to fit the animal to prevent pain or discomfort and to ease the burden of pulling a load. A farmer would yoke an older, seasoned ox with a younger, inexperienced ox so the younger ox would learn to "pull the plow" correctly. By sharing the yoke, the elder ox draws harder and bears the majority of the load so the younger ox knows what to do. The younger ox learns from his mentor to gain the skills necessary to one day teach another (sounds like discipleship).

Jesus is saying we don't have to "pull the plow" by ourselves. He will be in the yoke with us, lightening our burdens and teaching us what we need. Jesus declares his yoke is "easy." The word easy here does not imply simple, but good. If I'm yoked to Jesus, there is peace in being yoked to someone good, patient, and kind.

Here's a paraphrase:

"Get in the yoke with me and let me disciple you. I will bear the weight of your burden. My yoke is "good," and you will find rest and companionship in our labor together." Life is much easier when you invite Jesus in and let him pull the plow. Will you take the rest of I AM today?

Doug Schilling

Day 30 - March 25

Read: Matthew 17:1-9

What do you do when unexpected events occur in your life? I had an unexpected change happen in my life about 5 years ago. My husband and I were taking an evening walk when he suddenly collapsed and passed away. I was shocked and terrified. I knew in that moment everything in my life was about to change.

In Matthew 17, an unexpected event occurred in the lives of Peter, James, and John as they witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus. Imagine as God's voice broke through a bright cloud and proclaimed that Jesus was his beloved son. The three disciples were so terrified that they fell to the ground. They sensed that things would never be the same. Jesus touched them and told them to get up and not be afraid.

The transfiguration encounter didn't change their circumstances, but provided the strength they would need to endure the difficult road ahead. I wonder how many times these men would come back to "that moment" while witnessing Christ's suffering, death, resurrection, and even dealing with life after his ascension.

That's the interesting thing about an unexpected event, you never forget "that moment" as you're faced with a new reality. These unexpected events come in many forms and can bring fear, confusion, and many unanswered questions. But in the midst of uncertainty, Christ is there. There's a still, small voice telling you to get up and not be afraid.

Lil Smith

Day 31 - March 26

Read: Matthew 22:32

I AM. These two words could be God's answer to any question we pose. They stand alone to make a powerful statement. God, through his son, Jesus, chose to offer explanations to our questions instead of simply stating "because I said so." Unfortunately, sometimes the message is lost because we have our own thoughts on what we want or how we think things should be.

The beginning of the chapter indicates that Jesus had just presented the parable of the wedding feast. This parable lays out the foundation for salvation but also for Jesus' fulfillment of prophecy. Three Jewish groups were present in this chapter. The Pharisees were there who were infamous sticklers for the law. Then there were the Herodians, likely of Roman influence, and the Sadducees of Greek influence. They were affluent groups in their own rights. All of these groups had become accustomed to their ways of life and their beliefs. Jesus' teachings were upsetting the status quo. The latter two groups were sent by the Pharisees to heckle Jesus and question him. The Herodians quipped about taxation and were told that God was interested in what was his. The Sadducees, who did not believe in the afterlife, asked about property rights in Heaven. Jesus answered them in verse 32. God, being the God of the living, provides the hope of salvation which is eternal life in heaven. Both answers show the love that God has for us and what his desire is for us.

There are many parallels which can be recognized between current events and this event recorded roughly 2000 years ago. The Bible states that Jesus spoke to these groups firsthand, with authority, and yet they still missed the message due to their worldly concerns. We also can get so caught up in our own lives that we miss what God has for us. What blocks you from receiving God's message in your life?

Mike Clausing

Day 32 - March 27

Read: Mark 14:62

This statement by Jesus comes during his trial before the High Priest, Caiaphas. He initially offered no response to the charges that were made. However, when the High Priest asked specifically "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" Jesus' answer left no doubt about his deity. Although "I am" seems like a simple and straightforward response, the acknowledgement of his identity uses the same words God used when he told Moses to say to the Israelites "I am has sent me to you" (Exodus 3:14).

Jesus continues by using the phrase "son of man," which he called himself throughout his ministry. This too has Old Testament origins. Daniel used it in a messianic vision he had (Daniel 7:13-14). Christ then punctuates his claim by placing the son of man at the "right hand of the mighty one and coming on the clouds of heaven." The examples of clouds representing God include the cloud that led the Israelites by day (Exodus 13:21), a cloud present when God spoke to Moses (Exodus 19:9; 24:15), a cloud that enveloped the tabernacle upon its completion (Numbers 9:15), a cloud that filled the temple when the ark of the covenant was placed in the Holy of Holies (1 Kings 8:10), and a cloud at Jesus' transfiguration (Mark 9:7).

Jesus' claim is especially significant because it reinforced his power and authority to his followers who likely had doubts as they witnessed him betrayed by a friend, arrested by a mob and placed on trial. His promises continue to be a comfort to all of us in this most blessed season.

Dave Gorenflo

Day 33 - March 28

Read: Luke 9:20

Imagine an in person conversation with Jesus! I have heard people say many times, "When I get to heaven I plan to ask Jesus." Most of the time, in these instances, the conversation is one-sided. We are the ones asking the questions, but what if Jesus was asking us a question? What if, like Peter (one of Jesus' disciples), Jesus would ask us, "Who do you say I am?" What would be your response? Peter responded, "God's Messiah."

As you grow in your relationship with Jesus, he becomes so many wonderful things to you. He is ready and available. Seek him and you will find the answer to the question, "Who do you say I am?"

As I was driving down the road the other day listening to Klove, the song "Who You Are To Me," by Chris Tomlin and Lady A came on. The chorus in this song answers this question beautifully:

[Chorus: Chris Tomlin & Lady A, Chris Tomlin]

You're amazing, faithful, love's open door

When I'm empty You fill me with hunger for more

Of Your mercy, Your goodness

Lord, You're the air that I breathe

That's who You are to me

Who You are to me

The song goes on to describe Jesus as holy, worthy, the Messiah and our redeemer. I do not know about you, but if that is who Jesus is, count me in! Take a few minutes today and listen to the song. You should take some time each day to really get to know who Jesus is for yourself. I promise you will not be disappointed. Before long, you will be able to answer exactly who Jesus is to you!

Denikia Fields

Day 34 - March 29

Read: John 6:35, 41, 48, 51

God created our bodies to require certain things in order to function properly. Sure, we all love to eat donuts or drink pop, but our bodies ultimately suffer without the proper diet and nutrition. Whenever we try to go on a diet, it seems like we crave those things we can't have. However, once we put the habits in place and have been eating right and getting fit, we soon realize we feel a lot better. Eventually, we won't crave the junk food like we once did.

In the verse for today, Jesus calls himself the "bread of life." There is a different kind of hunger that only he can fulfill. Sadly, we are good at filling ourselves with junk. Even as Christians, we can become consumed and focused with the wrong things. We crave attention, accolades, friends, fame, wealth, possessions, or followers on social media to try to fill us up. These things might seem like they satisfy temporarily, but we will always end up hungry for more.

Our identity is in Christ. He knows how to fulfill us so we can live our best life. Stop trying to find fulfillment in all the wrong places. Once we allow Jesus to fill the void in our lives, we will stop craving those other things. Ultimately, we will be better, stronger and healthier without them.

Challenge: Every time today you have a negative thought, pray and ask how you can see the situation through God's eyes. Stop dwelling on the negative- it's not good for you! Pray that you will hunger and thirst for righteousness, finding the good in each and every situation so you will be filled with good things from the Lord.

Pastor Chuck Osborne

Day 35 - March 30

Read: John 8:12, 18, 21, 23

In John 8:12, Jesus refers to himself as the light of the world. He tells us if we believe in him, we need not walk in darkness. Many tasks are performed easier in light than in the dark. For instance, something as simple as walking can be difficult or even dangerous in the dark. Light dispels darkness. As Christians, we can reflect the light of Jesus to those around us when going through dark and difficult times.

When going through difficult times, it is important to remember whose we are. We can have confidence that Jesus is who he says he is and that he has control over all things. When experiencing difficult times that seem insurmountable, it is important to focus on the light, his faithfulness, and that he is in control of ALL things. Remaining focused on the light will allow us to reflect his light to those who are watching how we respond.

In this scripture, Jesus reminds them he is not of this earth. It is important to remember difficult times are temporary, and this world is not our home.

After writing this devotional, we personally recognize that one of these difficult times may be just ahead for us and that each of you reading will be watching to see how we respond. We are praying to be faithful and to remain focused on the light, trusting he is in control.

Kevin & Jane Shrider

Day 36 - March 31

Read: John 10:7, 9

When it comes to the sheep pen, the shepherd will guard the opening with his body and his staff. Functioning as the gate, the shepherd is able to let his sheep in and protect them from danger outside the pen.

In the book of John, Jesus describes himself as the “gate for the sheep” for a very specific reason. Jesus is “the gate” to God’s salvation for us. In fact, Jesus states later in chapter 14, “No one comes to the father except through me.” Through Jesus’ coming and his time on earth, we have been given access to God. He is the entry point to the God we serve, who is our caring master. Life in Christ is more meaningful than life without him because of his never-ending forgiveness, love, and guidance. Just like a good shepherd, he protects us and offers safety and security. With Jesus Christ as our shepherd, we will always be safe and protected in his love.

Emily Service

Day 37 - April 1

Read: John 10:11-15

Reflect: Who or what are you following? Do you recognize the good shepherd’s voice?

Oftentimes, we are following the hired hand. These could be our own understanding, our own goals, people we call “friends,” media, presidents, money, fame, or so on. When these things ultimately fail or when tough situations come, we are left stranded, to be devoured by the wolves. But, this is not the end for those of us who believe. We have hope, peace, and comfort when we follow the good shepherd because he knows who we are (Psalm 139: 13-14), and we know his goodness. We have seen him deliver us time and time again.

What flock are you in? Are you following the hired hand who will leave you? Or will you follow the good shepherd who is there with you? We are united because of our Jesus. This is the common ground we all share: being made in God’s image. We were created to love and share in community with all of creation (Genesis 1:26-27).

What keeps you from uniting with the rest of the flock (other followers of Christ)? Christ had the authority to lay down his life and raise it again so that we might live (John 3:16-17). He did this out of love and care for his creation. His love is so deep that he would take on the wolves so that we could live. He gave his body in place of our death.

Now, how can we begin to live as a shepherd of love to our community that points others to the good shepherd?

Pray: That we may hear God’s voice, for unity, for the division in your heart to be removed, and for God to guide you in blessing your community.

Pastor Alex Workman

Day 38 - April 2

Read: John 15:5

Relationships are a tricky endeavor for almost every person. In order for a relationship to be fruitful, one must be vulnerable. You have to be willing to open yourself up to the other person. Openness can go one of two ways: ruin or righteousness. More times than not, we find ourselves on the latter portion of that scale. Living in a broken world, people are always going to let us down. It is in our nature to be selfish. But, Jesus promised a different kind of relationship for us. God came to us in flesh and bone to rectify the relationship. Our God goes with us, and he never leaves us or forsakes us (Deut. 31.6).

In his own words in the passage for today, Jesus is clear about the expectation: we are to remain in him. It is when we are connected to Jesus that we bear fruit. Just like a ripe fruit is pleasing to others, we should be that for the people around us. The only goal for a fruit besides being delicious is to spread its seed to grow more fruit. It should be the same for us. God wants to use our fruits to show others the relationship that he desires for all of his creation.

Pastor Dylan Kelly

Day 39 - April 3

Read: John 14:2-3, 6, 20, 28

As you read these marvelous statements of Jesus, you likely do not think of the word, "power." We Christians can be a bit shy about using that term very often, yet it is at the root of this passage. For example, in the human experience, places have power. Think of places in your life that have significance and power for you. They were or are places of safety, joy, memory and great importance. We treasure those places. They may have even been places of fear and sadness. But, they have or had power in our lives. Jesus speaks of going to prepare a place for us. We consider that to be about Heaven. Is Heaven a powerful place, where the Almighty is and where we will be with the resurrected Christ? Yes! It shouts of the power of God and the power of the resurrection and the power of life in Christ!

During this anxious and dangerous time of the virus, we value "safe places." In Christ is our most complete security and safety. Why? Because God has the power to provide it! Jesus claims to be the way, the truth and the life. Each of those is a powerful gift to us. St. Paul speaks of the resurrection and the gospel in terms of power, from God to us. It affirms that Jesus is who and what he said he is. Let's join the apostle who said, "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection," and finally join him in the place he is preparing for us!

Pastor Dave Holdren

Day 40 - April 4

Read: John 11:11, 15, 25

He could have. He should have. So why didn't he? Jesus' words are strikingly eerie in our Covid culture where death seems imminent and a vaccine is our evasive savior: "I'm glad I was not there so that you may believe." I'm glad I wasn't there to save Lazarus? I'm glad Lazarus died? I'm glad the vaccine didn't come in time? I'm glad you never made it out of the hospital? That's not something anyone wants to read on Easter morning, is it?

How can Jesus speak so flippantly to people who just lost their brother, and in almost the same breath proclaim, "I am the resurrection and the life?" I guess if there is one thing we value above everything else—above money, comfort, renown, and security—it's our lives. There is nothing wrong with wanting to live healthily (pain stinks!) or spending as long as we can on earth to love on our family. Jesus is probably speaking in hyperbole here: Life is good, but not when compared to eternal life. When compared to an intimate existence both now and forever with him, these decades disappear as quickly as a large pizza on my family's dinner table.

So, hold onto him with hope as he is the only thing of eternal value! On this Easter Day, Jesus is asking us to loosen our grip on this life and tighten our grip onto him. He is our RESURRECTION from dependence, destruction, and divorce today and RESURRECTION into heaven forever. He is our LIFE today and our eternal LIFE forever!

Pastor Beau Hummel

If this devotional has made a difference in your life, if you have simply enjoyed it, or if you have accepted Jesus as your personal Lord & Savior, we would like to hear from you. Your words will encourage us!

Send email to cfiant@dayspringwesleyan.org



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