

# Lent 2023 | Reflect. Repent. Restore

## 40 Days of Fasting & Prayer Guide

February 22, 2023 (Ash Wednesday) – April 9, 2023 (Easter Sunday)

### 1<sup>st</sup> Week (2/22-2/25): Confession of Sin

#### DAY 1

2/22 (Ash Wednesday)

#### Biblical Readings:

#### Psalm 51

For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

- <sup>1</sup> *Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your unfailing love;  
according to your great compassion  
blot out my transgressions.*
- <sup>2</sup> *Wash away all my iniquity  
and cleanse me from my sin.*
- <sup>3</sup> *For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is always before me.*
- <sup>4</sup> *Against you, you only, have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight,  
so that you are proved right when you speak  
and justified when you judge.*
- <sup>5</sup> *Surely I was sinful at birth,  
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*
- <sup>6</sup> *Surely you desire truth in the inner parts;  
you teach me wisdom  
in the inmost place.*
- <sup>7</sup> *Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;  
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.*
- <sup>8</sup> *Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.*
- <sup>9</sup> *Hide your face from my sins  
and blot out all my iniquity.*

- <sup>10</sup> *Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*
- <sup>11</sup> *Do not cast me from your presence  
or take your Holy Spirit from me.*
- <sup>12</sup> *Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*

**Reflection:**

“The Lenten season is about the sin that was the reason for the suffering and sacrifice of the Savior. It is about taking time to reflect on why we all needed such a radical move of redemption, to confess the hold that sin still has on us, and to focus on opening our hands, in confession and submission, and letting go of sin once again. But as we do this, it is important to remember that the knowledge of sin is not a dark and nasty thing but a huge and wonderful blessing. If you are aware of your sin, you are aware of it only because you have been visited by amazing grace. Don’t resist that awareness. Silence your inner lawyer and all the self-defending arguments for your righteousness. Quit relieving your guilt by pointing a finger of blame at someone else. And stop telling yourself in the middle of a sermon that you know someone who really needs to hear it. Be thankful that you have been chosen to bear the burden of the knowledge of sin, because that burden is what drove you and will continue to drive you to seek the help and rescue that only the Savior Jesus can give you. To see sin clearly is a sure sign of God’s grace. Be thankful.” (Paul David Tripp, “*Journey to the Cross*”, p14)

**Prayer:**

1. Confess your sin to God (Psalm 51:1-6). When was the last time you wept over your sin?
2. Ask God to clean and wash you (Psalm 51:7)
3. Ask for God’s grace to live a Spirit-led life, and to restore to you the joy of salvation (Psalm 51: 11-12)

**DAY 2**

**2/23 (Thurs)**

**Biblical Readings:**

**Psalm 130**

A song of ascents.

- <sup>1</sup> *Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD;*
- <sup>2</sup> *O Lord, hear my voice.  
Let your ears be attentive  
to my cry for mercy.*
- <sup>3</sup> *If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins,  
O Lord, who could stand?*
- <sup>4</sup> *But with you there is forgiveness;  
therefore you are feared.*
- <sup>5</sup> *I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,  
and in his word I put my hope.*

<sup>6</sup> *My soul waits for the Lord  
more than watchmen wait for the morning,  
more than watchmen wait for the morning.*

<sup>7</sup> ***O Israel, put your hope in the LORD,  
for with the LORD is unfailing love  
and with him is full redemption.***

<sup>8</sup> *He himself will redeem Israel  
from all their sins.*

#### *Righteousness Through Faith*

#### **Romans 3:23-26**

<sup>23</sup> *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,* <sup>24</sup> *and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.* <sup>25</sup> *God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—* <sup>26</sup> *he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.*

#### *Future Glory*

#### **Romans 8:19-25**

<sup>19</sup> *The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.* <sup>20</sup> *For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope* <sup>21</sup> *that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.* <sup>22</sup> *We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.* <sup>23</sup> *Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.* <sup>24</sup> *For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has?* <sup>25</sup> *But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.*

#### **Reflection:**

“It is important to dedicate a season of every year to sit under the shadow of the cross of Jesus Christ once again. Under the shadow of the cross, sin doesn’t surprise us anymore, doesn’t depress us anymore, and doesn’t move us to deny or defend. Under the shadow of the cross, we remember who we are and what it is that we are dealing with. Under the shadow of the cross, we are required to admit that the greatest enemy we face is not difficulty or maltreatment from without, but the enemy of sin within. Under the shadow of the cross, we quit pointing fingers and begin crying out for help. Under the shadow of the cross, we are reminded that we are not in this battle alone; in fact, there we admit that we have no power whatsoever to battle on our own. Under the shadow of the cross we get our sanity back, admitting who we are and what it is that we so desperately need. The shadow of the cross is a place of peace and protection that can be found nowhere else. Let the shadow of the cross be your teacher.” (Paul David Tripp, “*Journey to the Cross*”, p18)

#### **Prayer :**

1. Give thanks to God that your failure can, via confession, find a remedy in God’s grace (Psalm 130:1-4).

2. Praise God that His grace is grounded not only in a divine heart of love but in its disclosure through the death of Jesus on the cross as the objective basis of full redemption (Psalm 130:5-8, Romans 3:23-26 *Righteousness Through Faith*).

3. Pray to God that while we groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies, we wait for it patiently with hope (Romans 8:19-25 *Future Glory*)

## **DAY 3**

**2/24 (Fri)**

### **Biblical Readings:**

#### **Psalm 74**

*A maskil of Asaph.*

- 1 Why have you rejected us forever, O God?  
Why does your anger smolder against the sheep of your pasture?*
- 2 Remember the people you purchased of old,  
the tribe of your inheritance, whom you redeemed—  
Mount Zion, where you dwelt.*
- 3 Turn your steps toward these everlasting ruins,  
all this destruction the enemy has brought on the sanctuary.*
- 4 Your foes roared in the place where you met with us;  
they set up their standards as signs.*
- 5 They behaved like men wielding axes  
to cut through a thicket of trees.*
- 6 They smashed all the carved paneling  
with their axes and hatchets.*
- 7 They burned your sanctuary to the ground;  
they defiled the dwelling place of your Name.*
- 8 They said in their hearts, "We will crush them completely!"  
They burned every place where God was worshiped in the land.*
- 9 We are given no miraculous signs;  
no prophets are left,  
and none of us knows how long this will be.*
- 10 How long will the enemy mock you, O God?  
Will the foe revile your name forever?*
- 11 Why do you hold back your hand, your right hand?  
Take it from the folds of your garment and destroy them!*
- 12 But you, O God, are my king from of old;  
you bring salvation upon the earth.*
- 13 It was you who split open the sea by your power;  
you broke the heads of the monster in the waters.*
- 14 It was you who crushed the heads of Leviathan  
and gave him as food to the creatures of the desert.*
- 15 It was you who opened up springs and streams;  
you dried up the ever flowing rivers.*

- <sup>16</sup> *The day is yours, and yours also the night;  
you established the sun and moon.*
- <sup>17</sup> *It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth;  
you made both summer and winter.*
- <sup>18</sup> *Remember how the enemy has mocked you, O LORD,  
how foolish people have reviled your name.*
- <sup>19</sup> *Do not hand over the life of your dove to wild beasts;  
do not forget the lives of your afflicted people forever.*
- <sup>20</sup> *Have regard for your covenant,  
because haunts of violence fill the dark places of the land.*
- <sup>21</sup> *Do not let the oppressed retreat in disgrace;  
may the poor and needy praise your name.*
- <sup>22</sup> *Rise up, O God, and defend your cause;  
remember how fools mock you all day long.*
- <sup>23</sup> *Do not ignore the clamor of your adversaries,  
the uproar of your enemies, which rises continually.*

**Reflection:**

“Let your heart feel the burden of the full weight of sin both internal and external. Scan your life, scan your heart, scan your thoughts and desires, scan your words and behavior, scan the struggles of the people around you, scan the world you live in, and find reason to groan. Let sin’s sadness drive you once again to the cross where your Savior groaned aloud on your behalf as he bore the horrible weight of sin. Take time to let sadness sink in so it may lead you to redemption’s celebration, as you remember that the debt has been paid and the ultimate victory over what makes you groan has been guaranteed. Yes, indeed, it is good to groan.” (Paul David Tripp, *Journey to the Cross*, p26-27)

**Prayer:**

1. Pray for the world which we live in. It is groaning, waiting for redemption.
2. Pray that you can more effectively groan over your sin which will lead you to redemption’s celebration.
3. Pray that God will cleanse His church so that we can shine for Jesus.

**DAY 4**  
**2/25 (Sat)**

**Biblical Readings:**

**Luke 9:23-25**

<sup>23</sup> *Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. <sup>24</sup> For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. <sup>25</sup> What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?*

*Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ*

**Romans 6:1-14** <sup>1</sup>What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? <sup>2</sup>By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? <sup>3</sup>Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup>We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

<sup>5</sup>If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. <sup>6</sup>For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— <sup>7</sup>because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

<sup>8</sup>Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup>For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. <sup>10</sup>The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

<sup>11</sup>In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. <sup>12</sup>Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. <sup>13</sup>Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. <sup>14</sup>For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

**Reflection:**

“It is possible to think that you are a God-worshiper because he is the object of our formal religious worship, but when it comes to the day-by-day affections of your heart, something or someone else could be in control. And it's not always that we are under the control of evil things. Often good things have control over us that they should not have. Good things become bad things when they become ruling things. So how about letting yourself suffer loss for a season? Let go of things you tend to prize. Let this season of sacrifice loosen your hands and free your heart. Let go of some of your comforts, things that have perhaps comforted you too much, so that your heart is free to seek a better Comforter. Pray that a season of going without will refocus your eyes and reposition your heart. God is good at using seasons of suffering to cause us to let go of our dependency on created things and reach out in dependency to our Creator, Savior, and Lord. May this season's discomforts lead us to find lasting comfort in him.” (Paul David Tripp, *Journey to the Cross*, p31-32)

**Prayer:**

1. Pray that God will reveal to you some idols you are tempted to bow down to.
2. Pray that God will reveal to you what do you need to give up, for a season or more permanently, to root the idols out of your heart.
3. Pray that God will reveal to you what things you ask the physical creation to do that only God can do? (Take a look at where you seek pleasure and what causes conflict in your closest relationships). Pray that God will lead you to find lasting comfort in Him.