

Lent 2021 | Reflect. Repent. Restore

40 Days of Fasting & Prayer Guide

February 17, 2021 (Ash Wednesday) – April 4, 2021 (Easter Sunday)

3rd Week (2/28-3/6): Searching

DAY 12

2/28 (Sun)

Biblical Readings:

Colossians 3:1-10

Rules for Holy Living

3 *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸ But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹ Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Reflection:

“In this season of reflection, confession, and willing sacrifice, how about scanning the evidence in your own life? How about taking stock of what your emotions tell you about what you’re truly serving? How about being willing to confess to having a fickle and wandering heart? How about not assuming that the habits of religion mean that your heart is ruled by the Lord at street level? How about offering to God the one sacrifice he will never reject, the sacrifice of humble, honest, heartfelt confession? Remember David’s words of assurance to all who would come to God and confess a wandering heart: “*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;/ a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise*” (Ps. 51:17). You are never in a safer, more blessed place than when your heart is broken in this way.” (Paul David Tripp, “*Journey to the Cross*”, p76)

Prayer:

Slowly read and pray through *Colossians 3:1-10*. Ask yourself if your focus is on things above, or if the negative actions and attitudes listed are present in your life, revealing a focus on the things of earth.

DAY 13
3/1 (Mon)

Biblical Readings:

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

The Suffering and Glory of the Servant

- ¹³ *See, my servant will act wisely;
he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.*
- ¹⁴ *Just as there were many who were appalled at him—
his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man
and his form marred beyond human likeness—*
- ¹⁵ *so will he sprinkle many nations,
and kings will shut their mouths because of him.
For what they were not told, they will see,
and what they have not heard, they will understand.*

53 *Who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?*

- ² *He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.*
- ³ *He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.
Like one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

- ⁴ *Surely he took up our infirmities
and carried our sorrows,
yet we considered him stricken by God,
smitten by him, and afflicted.*
- ⁵ *But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,
and by his wounds we are healed.*

- ⁶ *We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.*

- ⁷ *He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before her shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.*

- ⁸ *By oppression and judgment he was taken away.*

- And who can speak of his descendants?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was stricken.*
- ⁹ *He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence,
nor was any deceit in his mouth.*
- ¹⁰ *Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,
and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.*
- ¹¹ *After the suffering of his soul,
he will see the light of life and be satisfied;
by his knowledge my righteous
servant will justify many,
and he will bear their iniquities.*
- ¹² *Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,
and he will divide the spoils with the strong,
because he poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.
For he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.*

Reflection:

“If Jesus willingly endured what he endured and suffered all that he suffered to be the perfect substitute, doing for you what you could have never done for yourself, would you not be willing to make sacrifices for him? *“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God”* (Rom. 12:1). May God give you the grace to do just that. Do you find comfort attractive and sacrifice hard? Perhaps your first sacrifice this Lenten season should be a sacrifice of confession, admitting your struggle to let go of the world in order to hold more tightly to your Lord.” (Paul David Tripp, *“Journey to the Cross”*, p83)

Prayer :

Slowly read and pray through *Isaiah 53:1-12*, and meditate on the list of sacrifices Jesus bore for you.

DAY 14
3/2 (Tue)

Biblical Readings:

Psalm 139

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.

- ¹ *O LORD, you have searched me
and you know me.*

² You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.

³ You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.

⁴ Before a word is on my tongue
you know it completely, O LORD.

⁵ You hem me in—behind and before;
you have laid your hand upon me.

⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.

⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?

⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,

¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.

¹¹ If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,”

¹² even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.

¹³ For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother’s womb.

¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place.
When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,

¹⁶ your eyes saw my unformed body.
All the days ordained for me
were written in your book
before one of them came to be.

¹⁷ How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!

¹⁸ Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand.
When I awake,
I am still with you.

¹⁹ If only you would slay the wicked, O God!
Away from me, you bloodthirsty men!

- ²⁰ *They speak of you with evil intent;
your adversaries misuse your name.*
- ²¹ *Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD,
and abhor those who rise up against you?*
- ²² *I have nothing but hatred for them;
I count them my enemies.*
- ²³ *Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.*
- ²⁴ *See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Reflection:

“Many of us resist the loving, correcting, and protecting convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit, but we do not know it. Many of us say we love the church, but we are functionally not open, not approachable, and not humbly ready to listen when we are confronted by what we have not seen or do not know about ourselves. So I want to encourage you to do some new things during this Lenten season.” (Paul David Tripp, “*Journey to the Cross*”, p87)

Prayer:

Slowly read and pray through *Psalm 139*, where we learn about God searching our hearts and knowing us even when we are misjudged by others. Ask God to search your heart, and confess any sin he reveals to you.

DAY 15
3/3 (Wed)

Biblical Readings:

Ephesians 6:10-18
The Armor of God

¹⁰ *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.* ¹¹ *Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.* ¹² *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.* ¹³ *Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.* ¹⁴ *Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,* ¹⁵ *and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.* ¹⁶ *In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.* ¹⁷ *Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.* ¹⁸ *And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*

Reflection:

“Do you tend to think that spiritual warfare doesn’t include you? Have you fallen into thinking that because of your involvement in the body of Christ and its ministries that there could be no idols in your life? Have you assumed a level of personal spiritual safety that may not be true? During this season of Lent, how about confessing to a wandering heart? How about asking your Lord to reveal to you where your heart may be under the control of something other than God? How about examining what you really crave or what you really want for your life? How about looking for that person, place, or thing that has become too important to you? And how about crying out for the rescuing grace that Jesus died to give you? May sorrow over the idolatry that still plagues you drive you into a deeper dependency on the rescuing and forgiving grace of your Savior and into a deeper celebration of the freedom that he promises you now and even more completely in the forever with him that is to come.” (Paul David Tripp, *“Journey to the Cross”*, pp92-93)

Prayer:

Slowly read and pray through *Ephesians 6:10-18*, and resolve to fight the spiritual battle for your heart with the weapons God has provided.

DAY 16**3/4 (Thurs)****Biblical Readings:**

Romans 3:9-18

No One Is Righteous

⁹ *What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. ¹⁰ As it is written:*

“There is no one righteous, not even one;

¹¹ *there is no one who understands,
no one who seeks God.*

¹² *All have turned away,
they have together become worthless;
there is no one who does good,
not even one.”*

¹³ *“Their throats are open graves;
their tongues practice deceit.”*

“The poison of vipers is on their lips.”

¹⁴ *“Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.”*

¹⁵ *“Their feet are swift to shed blood;*

¹⁶ *ruin and misery mark their ways,*

¹⁷ *and the way of peace they do not know.”*

¹⁸ *“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”*

Reflection:

“ So this Lenten season, don’t just give up physical stuff. How about coming to God with the pleasing sacrifice of confession? Come to him this season and place your pride on his altar, confessing your wandering heart and acknowledging once again that you are a person in need of mercy, and the mercy you need is found only in him. In this season of sacrifice, take words with you and return to your Lord.” (Paul David Tripp, “*Journey to the Cross*”, p98)

Prayer:

Slowly read and pray through *Romans 3:10-18*, spend 15 minutes in honest confession, using *Romans 3:10-18* as a guide.

DAY 17**3/5 (Fri)****Biblical Readings:***Matthew 6:19-34**Treasures in Heaven*

¹⁹ “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

²² “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

²⁴ “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

Do Not Worry

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

²⁸ “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Matthew 13:44-46

The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

⁴⁴ *“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.*

⁴⁵ *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶ When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.*

Reflection:

“So in this season of quiet spiritual reflection, stop and pay attention, ask deeply personal questions, and make a treasure evaluation. Be willing to confess where you’ve placed your hope in earthbound treasure, sacrificing to get what it could never deliver. And give yourself in a new way to make sacrifices in the service of the King of kings. He never promises what he cannot deliver, and he is able to do in your heart what nothing else or no one else can do.” (Paul David Tripp, *“Journey to the Cross”*, p105)

Prayer:

Slowly read and pray through *Matthew 6:19-34 and 13:44-46*, and meditate on where you are setting your heart.

DAY 18

3/6 (Sat)

Biblical Readings:

Isaiah 46:5-13

- ⁵ *“To whom will you compare me or count me equal?
To whom will you liken me that we may be compared?*
- ⁶ *Some pour out gold from their bags
and weigh out silver on the scales;
they hire a goldsmith to make it into a god,
and they bow down and worship it.*
- ⁷ *They lift it to their shoulders and carry it;
they set it up in its place, and there it stands.
From that spot it cannot move.
Though one cries out to it, it does not answer;
it cannot save him from his troubles.*
- ⁸ *“Remember this, fix it in mind,
take it to heart, you rebels.*
- ⁹ *Remember the former things, those of long ago;
I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is none like me.*
- ¹⁰ *I make known the end from the beginning,
from ancient times, what is still to come.*

- I say: My purpose will stand,
and I will do all that I please.*
- ¹¹ *From the east I summon a bird of prey;
from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose.
What I have said, that will I bring about;
what I have planned, that will I do.*
- ¹² *Listen to me, you stubborn-hearted,
you who are far from righteousness.*
- ¹³ *I am bringing my righteousness near,
it is not far away;
and my salvation will not be delayed.
I will grant salvation to Zion,
my splendor to Israel.*

Reflection:

“The story of our redemption is historical proof of the unstoppable sovereignty of God. Surprise is a normal part of life for all of us. We are greeted with mystery again and again. We get caught up short, unprepared for what is coming down the line. The redemptive story confronts us with the fact that God is not like us. He saw our need, he planned how to meet that need, and everything happened just as he planned. In the vast expanse of time, the huge company of people, and the multitude of locations that were the setting for his plan of grace, he was never surprised, never unprepared, and always in control. Christ’s march to the cross reinforces for us that our rest and hope are not in our knowing, but in his ruling. The God who knows no surprises will surprise us again. But it is okay, because what we don’t know, he knows; what we can’t control, he controls, and because he does, we can live with mystery and surprise and not be afraid” (Paul David Tripp, “*Journey to the Cross*”, pp107-109)

Prayer:

Slowly read and pray through *Isaiah 46:5-13*, and take courage and comfort in the (sometimes surprising) sovereignty of God.