

Lent 2023 | Reflect. Repent. Restore

40 Days of Fasting & Prayer Guide

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

6th Week (3/26-4/1): The story of Jesus guaranteed how your story will end

DAY 33

3/26 (Sun)

Biblical Readings:

Romans 8:31-39

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written:

*“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”*

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Reflection:

“The story of Jesus guarantees how your story will end...Jesus was willing to come, suffer, and die so that we would have a way better story. He suffered so that our suffering would end forever. He lived a selfless life so that we would be freed from our bondage to ourselves, so that for all eternity we would know the liberating joy of living for something and someone bigger than ourselves. Because of his humiliation we will know the exaltation of living forever in the presence of the King. Know today that no matter what you are going through, because of the grace of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, your little story has now been absorbed into his great story of victory over all that sin has broken. Because of what Jesus has done, you can rest in knowing the glorious way your story will end. In fact, because of the grace of Jesus, the end of your story is that it has no end!” (Paul David. Tripp, *“Journey to the Cross”*, p191-192)

Prayer:

Slowly read and pray through *Romans 8:31-39* as God's promise to you that nothing will be able to separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

DAY 34**3/27 (Mon)****Biblical Readings:****2 Corinthians 5:14-21**

¹⁴ For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Reflection:

“Jesus’s life saw no defeat, so we could know victory…”

1. Taking stock of the past thirty-three days, what is God convicting you of?
2. What changes have you decided to make, and how are those changes going?
3. What fresh perspective have you gained on what the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus mean to you?

(Paul David. Tripp, “*Journey to the Cross*”, p195)

Prayer :

Slowly read and pray through *2 Corinthians 5:14-21*, and rejoice in the gospel message.

DAY 35**3/28 (Tue)****Biblical Readings:****Matthew 21:1-11*****The Triumphal Entry***

21 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”

⁴ This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

⁵ “Say to the Daughter of Zion,
‘See, your king comes to you,

*gentle and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’ ”*

⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. ⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. ⁸ A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

“Hosanna to the Son of David!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Hosanna in the highest!”

¹⁰ When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?”

¹¹ The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

Reflection:

“The march of Jesus to the cross was a march of humility and triumph...” This final ride of humility and triumph, on that borrowed colt, was a ride to the city of his death. Every aspect was done with the generations of souls who would put their trust in him in mind. He rode to his death so that we would reign in life with him forever. He did what he did so that, in a world made new again, we would sing hosanna songs to him forever and ever and ever.” (Paul David. Tripp, *“Journey to the Cross”*, p201)

Prayer:

Slowly read and pray through *Matthew 21:1-11*, and try to put yourself in the scene – what do you see, smell, hear, and feel?

DAY 36

3/29 (Wed)

Biblical Readings:

Mark 11:15-19

Jesus Clears the Temple

¹⁵ On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, ¹⁶ and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. ¹⁷ And as he taught them, he said, “Is it not written:

*“ ‘My house will be called
a house of prayer for all nations’?*

But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’ ”

¹⁸ The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

¹⁹ When evening came, they went out of the city.

Luke 19:45-48

Jesus at the Temple

⁴⁵ Then he entered the temple area and began driving out those who were selling. ⁴⁶ “It is written,” he said to them, “ ‘My house will be a house of prayer’; but you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’ ”

⁴⁷ Every day he was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him. ⁴⁸ Yet they could not find any way to do it, because all the people hung on his words.

Reflection:

“Jesus enters Jerusalem and takes no time to bask in the glory of the adoring crowds along the way. He knows he is on a mission of saving grace, and he knows how far that grace will extend. He knows that what is happening in the temple is not only a violation of his Father’s house, of promises made to Abraham, but also of what he came to earth to accomplish. Without care for what people will think of him, he is driven by righteous values and holy anger to act on behalf of those unable to act for themselves.

1. What was Jesus angry about? What were the moneychangers doing wrong?
2. What fills your heart with righteous anger? Where do you see modern-day moneychangers, and what are you called to do about it?
3. It’s easy to put ourselves on Jesus’s side here, but how might you be guilty of some of the same sins as the moneychangers?” (Paul David. Tripp, “*Journey to the Cross*”, p207)

Prayer:

Slowly read and pray through Mark 11:15-19 and Luke 19:45-48, meditate on the anger of Jesus in the temple, how it points to who He is and to clarify our values?

DAY 37

3/30 (Thurs)

Biblical Readings:

Matthew 23

Seven Woes

²³ Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: ² “The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. ³ So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. ⁴ They tie up heavy loads and put them on men’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

⁵ “Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; ⁶ they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; ⁷ they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them ‘Rabbi.’

⁸ “But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi,’ for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. ⁹ And do not call anyone on earth ‘father,’ for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. ¹⁰ Nor are you to be called ‘teacher,’ for you have one Teacher, the Christ. ¹¹ The

greatest among you will be your servant. ¹² For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

¹³ **“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!** You shut the kingdom of heaven in men’s faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.

¹⁵ **“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!** You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.

¹⁶ **“Woe to you, blind guides!** You say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ ¹⁷ You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? ¹⁸ You also say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is bound by his oath.’ ¹⁹ You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? ²⁰ Therefore, he who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. ²¹ And he who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. ²² And he who swears by heaven swears by God’s throne and by the one who sits on it.

²³ **“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!** You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. ²⁴ You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

²⁵ **“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!** You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶ Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

²⁷ **“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!** You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean. ²⁸ In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

²⁹ **“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!** You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. ³⁰ And you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ ³¹ So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. ³² Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers!

³³ **“You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? ³⁴ Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. ³⁵ And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. ³⁶ I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation.**

³⁷ **“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. ³⁸ Look, your house is left to you desolate. ³⁹ For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”**

Reflection:

“It should be a warning to us that the religious leaders of Jesus’ day could be so zealous and yet so completely wrong...In this season of reflection, sacrifice, and gratitude, I want to

give you an assignment. Take time to sit down with your Bible and carefully read Matthew 23. As you read how Jesus confronts the Pharisees, read with an open, humble, and prayerful heart. Allow those words of confrontation to expose and correct you, and as they do, may you grow ever more dependent upon and thankful for your Savior, who was willing to die to rescue you from the one thing you could never escape on your own: you.

(Paul David. Tripp, "Journey to the Cross", p212-213)

Prayer:

Slowly read and pray through *Matthew 23*, and ask the Lord to convict you where conviction is needed.

DAY 38

3/31 (Fri)

Biblical Readings:

Matthew 26:17-30

The Lord's Supper

¹⁷ *On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"*

¹⁸ *He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.'"*

¹⁹ *So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.*

²⁰ *When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. ²¹ And while they were eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me."*

²² *They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely not I, Lord?"*

²³ *Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. ²⁴ The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."*

²⁵ *Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?"*

Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you."

²⁶ *While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."*

²⁷ *Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*

²⁹ *I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."*

³⁰ *When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*

Reflection:

"Our hope is found in the fact that Jesus came to be the final Passover Lamb, not just a great teacher and a miracle healer...May you attach your sense of self, your meaning and purpose, your moral compass, and your hopes and dreams to the message delivered in that upper room and to the actual moment of sacrifice on that hill outside the city. And may every moment

of sin, weakness, and failure be punctuated by you singing to yourself the ultimate answer to the ultimate question: What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

1. What helps you enter into the true meaning of the Lord's Table, Jesus's blood and flesh for you?
2. In what ways are you trusting in something other than or in addition to Jesus's blood to save you?
3. How might it affect your day-to-day life if you really, deeply understood the importance of Jesus as your Passover Lamb, the way the Jews in Jesus's day did?
(Paul David. Tripp, "*Journey to the Cross*", p218-219)

Prayer:

Slowly read and pray through *Matthew 26:17-30*, and enter into the story.

DAY 39

4/1 (Sat)

Biblical Readings:

Matthew 26:36-46

Gethsemane

³⁶ Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

³⁹ Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

⁴⁰ Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. ⁴¹ "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

⁴² He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

⁴³ When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

⁴⁵ Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

Reflection:

"We have hope because Jesus was willing..."In that garden there was angst and fear, but there was not a shred of selfishness or rebellion. Jesus knew what he had been appointed to do. He knew what the culmination of his earthly work would be. In his humanity, it was a fearful thing to consider, but he had a submissive, loving, and willing heart. This moment of willingness is a moment of hope for all of us, who, in our sin, have lives that are marked by unwillingness. Our hope in this life and the one to come is never to be found in our willingness to believe in and follow him, but in his willingness to endure suffering and death for us. His willingness unleashes

the grace we need to be forgiven and to become more and more willing to lay down our lives for his kingdom and his glory.

1. Think of your difficult or challenging relationships. Where has “unwillingness” of sin crept in? What could happen if you chose to be willing in those areas instead?

2. Imagine yourself in the garden watching Jesus pray—what are you thinking? feeling? wondering about?

3. What specific things was Jesus willing to do for you? List them out, meditate on them, and thank him!”

(Paul David. Tripp, “*Journey to the Cross*”, p224-225)

Prayer:

Slowly read and pray through *Matthew 26:36-46*, and praise Jesus for withstanding every temptation toward selfishness or comfort for you.