

A JOURNEY THROUGH LENT

*Traveling a Lenten journey
with people in the third third of life*

Week 5



MONDAY, MARCH 15

Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he saved them from their distress.

He brought them out of darkness, the utter darkness,
and broke away their chains.

Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love
and his wonderful deeds for mankind,
for he breaks down gates of bronze
and cuts through bars of iron.

Psalm 107:13-16

As we continue our Lenten journey, this week's scripture readings remind us that when we experience troubling times or periods of distress, we can rely on God's love and be grateful that it offers us opportunities for new beginnings.

We invite you to join us in reflecting on these questions this week:

- What weighs down your heart or spirit right now?
- How have you experienced God's steadfast love?
- For what type of fresh start do you long in your life?

Prayer: O God, thank you for hearing us when we struggle and for surrounding us with your love, which enables us to start anew.
Amen.

TUESDAY, MARCH 16

Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he saved them from their distress.
He sent out his word and healed them;
he rescued them from the grave.
Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love
and his wonderful deeds for mankind.
Let them sacrifice thank offerings
and tell of his works with songs of joy.

Psalm 107:19-22

Time and again I have seen God's steadfast love in my life, especially with our children. Our first child came to us as an infant in foster care, and at age two we adopted him. He was an unexpected, special gift. After twelve years of marriage, our daughter was born to us. She, also, was a special gift.

As we raised the kids, we faced various difficulties. Our son had learning challenges. Our daughter had health challenges. God was faithful in providing the particular diagnoses and subsequent attention needed for each of them. We are thankful for both educational and medical care that helped them meet their challenges.

Surely, a great time of need for us was when our son died in an automobile accident at age 23. Again, we experienced God's steadfast love as we grieved. God's love is all sufficient.

Prayer: Loving God, thank you for your faithfulness and steadfast love in all circumstances. You are the Good Shepherd who holds me in your arms. I praise you for your guidance and comfort.
Amen.

Nancy Bancroft
Wakefield Baptist Church, Wakefield

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17

He turned the desert into pools of water
and the parched ground into flowing springs;
there he brought the hungry to live,
and they founded a city where they could settle.
They sowed fields and planted vineyards
that yielded a fruitful harvest;
he blessed them, and their numbers greatly increased,
and he did not let their herds diminish.

Psalm 107:35-38

I could not understand why God did not intercede and rescue my son from unexpected death. As I processed my grief, God was always available for my next inquisition of “whys.” Attending church was too difficult, but God never pressured me to go, rather assured me, “There is no hurry. Only when you are ready.” God counseled me, patiently, and with love. I knew I was not alone.

Prayer: God, I know you’re always there for me. Thanks for your help and for waiting, in love. Amen.

Kathy Merrill
(formerly) Central Baptist Church, Jamestown

THURSDAY, MARCH 18

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.
Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.
For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.

Psalm 51:1-3

God's love has always surrounded me, even though sometimes I may not have seen it at the time. When looking back I have had that "aha" realization that he was there all along as he has promised. The Lord has been there in all the "good times" for which I am so grateful. But even more important, he has been there in those times when the only prayer I could utter was, "Help me, Lord!" In his wisdom and love, the words to just the right hymn would come to mind, bringing peace, calm, and reassurance.

Prayer: Precious Lord, you are ever with us, surrounding us with your love. Thank you for being with us in the beautiful days, as well as the terrifying, stormy ones. In your holy name, Amen.

Sandy Dawley
Warwick Central Baptist Church, Warwick

FRIDAY, MARCH 19

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.

Psalm 51:7-9

Violence in contemporary society seems particularly worrisome and disheartening, even selfish of late. The phenomenon is not new; however, watching some Christians disconnect from their core religious beliefs to morph into angry mobs makes for a surreal spectacle. I wonder: “Will they never grasp that in the midst of what seems alluring momentum is the all too obvious link to a mob mentality of biblical times, which led to the crucifixion of our Lord?”

Prayer: I pray for the absence of brutality in every aspect of life.
Amen.

Suzanne Volmer
First Baptist Church, Pawtucket

SATURDAY, MARCH 20

Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Psalm 51:10-12

Do we really look at the beginning of each new day as a fresh start?
There is no going back to what happened yesterday, and we can only
imagine what tomorrow will bring if we are to have a tomorrow.

So live for the now in our life; breathe every breath and see each
sight for now. Love in the moment and thank God he allows each
and every one. Celebrate a new life and grow from what our elders
impressed upon us. It's OK to forgive yourself because he already has.
A fresh start.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for showing me how priceless life
is and how you lead us to your heavenly home. Your way, not mine.
Amen.

Eva Irby-Davis
Pleasant Street Baptist Church, Westerly

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT, MARCH 21

Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.”

John 12:23-26

This has been a difficult year for everyone, especially Christians who long for the fellowship of worship and singing and praising God together. Yet every winter yields to the hope of spring. Just as new growth comes and is welcomed into our gardens, so I look earnestly for newness, a renewed spirit in my heart. I long for renewed life, spiritually. I long for fellowship. I long for the joy that comes from living full of God’s Spirit. I want to meet more in small groups. I want to sing the songs in my heart, even if they are not on key. I want to spend more time alone in prayer, seeking God’s will for the next steps in my walk with him. I long to be God’s beloved daughter.

Prayer: O Lord, we are so grateful to be your children and to know you as Lord. Hear the cries of our heart, and bring us closer to you. Amen.

Sue Guilmain
Greenville Baptist Church, Greenville
