

A JOURNEY THROUGH LENT

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

Week 7



MONDAY, MARCH 29

How priceless is your unfailing love, O God!

People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.
They feast on the abundance of your house;
you give them drink from your river of delights.
For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light we see light.

Psalm 36:7-9

While every journey is unique, this year we invited you to travel your Lenten journey with people who are in the third third of life.

The people who have written reflections and prayers for this Lenten devotional also are unique. Take this week's authors. While each is navigating the third third of life, each is at a different place along that journey. They range from someone who sold his business and retired a bit early to two people who are past their 100th birthdays.

Just as their life journeys are unique, so are the faith journeys that they—and the rest of us—travel. There, however, is something special about having companions to accompany us on our different journeys. We are grateful you have traveled with us through this Lenten season.

As we conclude our Lenten journeys, we invite you to join us in reflecting on these questions:

- What are your deepest hopes as we enter this Holy Week?
- What brings meaning to you as we travel through this week?
- How are you preparing to receive the good news of Easter?

Prayer: O God, thank you for the unique journeys to which you call us. Thank you also that you travel with us, blessing us with your love and light. Amen.

TUESDAY, MARCH 30

For you have been my hope, Sovereign LORD,
my confidence since my youth.
From birth I have relied on you;
you brought me forth from my mother's womb.
I will ever praise you.
I have become a sign to many;
you are my strong refuge.
My mouth is filled with your praise,
declaring your splendor all day long.
Do not cast me away when I am old;
do not forsake me when my strength is gone.

Psalm 71:5-9

This is Holy Week. I always feel sad during this week, even on Palm Sunday. I can't stop thinking about how awful Jesus must have felt . . . all week long. Thursday evening we'll hold a candle-light service, and we'll celebrate communion. The sanctuary will be dark, and the congregation will be subdued. Friday noon, the service will focus on Jesus' going to the cross. The music will move me to tears. Saturday will be a prayer vigil, quiet and somber. But then . . . there's Sunday! Alleluia! Thank you, Jesus! He who has risen!

Prayer: O God, our Father, Lord Jesus, and Holy Spirit, no words can express how much your love means to us, how grateful we are for what you have done. Please inspire us, and help us to be worthy. Amen.

Meredith Eckel
Central Baptist Church, Westerly

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31

But may all who seek you
rejoice and be glad in you;
may those who long for your saving help always say,
“The LORD is great!”
But as for me, I am poor and needy;
come quickly to me, O God.
You are my help and my deliverer;
LORD, do not delay.

Psalm 70:4-5

What if. What if we paid attention to that advice our parents wanted to give to us or we didn't screw up that “Golden Opportunity” presented to us so long ago? (For one, I might not be living right now or have had to go through some unwanted experiences, some “things.”) What if Jesus had said to the Father, “I can't and I won't die for your people”?

He would not disobey, because our living depended on his dying, for him to complete the Father's plan. Jesus was the key. Without the key we cannot open our eternity with God. Such love we don't deserve and will never truly understand in this lifetime, but are grateful that on that Sunday morning the two Marys found the tomb empty.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I can't say thank you enough for saving me from sin, for allowing me a taste of unconditional love and leading me ever onward to home. If you call, I will come. When you say “go,” just point the way. This wretch is ready. I love you. Amen.

Eva Irby-Davis
Pleasant Street Baptist Church, Westerly

THURSDAY, APRIL 1

What shall I return to the LORD
for all his goodness to me?
I will lift up the cup of salvation
and call on the name of the LORD.
I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all his people.

Psalm 116:12-14

My father-in-law was born on Easter Sunday. When he was little, his mother told him, “Everyone was so happy that they all went to church!”

For the most part of this past year I have not physically been going to church. I have spent more time on devotions and prayer at home—more time with God.

Looking out my window, I can see signs of spring—the rebirth of nature—a promise of what’s to come.

Holy Week will be different this year, but in many ways more meaningful. Easter Sunday—in church or not—will be a very special time with God.

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for those times leading up to Easter. Thank you for your constant love and care. Amen.

Janet Whalen
Greenville Baptist Church, Greenville

FRIDAY, APRIL 2

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from saving me,
so far from my cries of anguish?

My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,
by night, but I find no rest.

Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;
you are the one Israel praises.

In you our ancestors put their trust;
they trusted and you delivered them.

To you they cried out and were saved;
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

Psalm 22:1-5

I think this may be one of the loneliest of Easter weeks in many years. We can't gather together and celebrate the triumphant entry or console each other in the torture and death. And most importantly we can't rejoice over the resurrection and the assurance that "the debt has been paid" as we have in the past. I would challenge us that "we" make sure that those in our very small circles know this great news. Jesus has overcome, and through his death and resurrection we are **SAVED!**

Prayer: Father, you have sent your son to make the atoning sacrifice for me. Please help me be a beacon of your grace and spread the good news. He is risen! In Jesus' heavenly name we pray. Amen.

Bobby Nelson
Norwood Baptist Church, Warwick

SATURDAY, APRIL 3

In you, LORD, I have taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame;
deliver me in your righteousness.

Turn your ear to me,
come quickly to my rescue;
be my rock of refuge,
a strong fortress to save me.

Since you are my rock and my fortress,
for the sake of your name lead and guide me.

Keep me free from the trap that is set for me,
for you are my refuge.

Psalm 31:17-18

Each journey through the Lenten season reminds me of a particular journey at the basis of my faith. On Ash Wednesday 1932, I began study with a group of 99 others to prepare for baptism. We were required to learn the Lord's Prayer, Apostle's Creed, Psalms 23 and 121, and John 3:16. We also learned how important it would be to follow our Bible study through everyday life. At 6:00 a.m. on April 1, 1932, my 12th birthday, I was baptized in the former Cranston Street-Roger Williams Baptist Church by Rev. York A. King, along with 99 others. We received the right hand of fellowship at the 11:00 a.m. service. The faith I professed on that day has carried me through to this Lenten season 89 years later through both good times and times of trial.

Prayer: Dear God, please guide us to carry our Easter faith throughout the year in a spirit of the resurrection. Amen.

Madeline Millin
Phillips Memorial Baptist Church, Cranston

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 4

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!”

Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?” “They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?” Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.” Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”).

John 20:1-2, 11-16

Easter Sunday has always been a day of celebration for God’s unspeakable gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. We go to church to worship God with songs, anthems, prayers, and shouts of adoration. We lift up our very souls in gratitude. These deep feelings always return with each Easter. So, what Easter Sunday means to me is Thanksgiving—another special day to express our gratitude. Yes, Easter has become another “Thanksgiving” day.

Prayer: Lord, help us to celebrate Easter a little each day you give us. Help us to witness for you, O God, “giving thanks in all things” (Ephesians 5:20). Amen.

Juanita Bedard
First Baptist Church in America, Providence

THANK YOU

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