

A JOURNEY THROUGH LENT

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

Week 6



MONDAY, MARCH 22

How can a young person stay on the path of purity?

By living according to your word.

I seek you with all my heart;

do not let me stray from your commands.

I have hidden your word in my heart

that I might not sin against you.

Psalm 119:9-11

How can a young person. . . ?

That question might seem an odd way to begin this week's Lenten devotional given that our reflections and prayers are written by people in the third third of life.

But the question continues with these words: *stay on the path*. And isn't staying on the path what each of us, regardless of our age, seeks as we travel our Lenten journey?

As you continue that journey this week, we invite you to join us in reflecting on these questions:

- For what spiritual lesson(s) are you most grateful?
- How has your faith changed as you've grown older?
- How might you express joy sometime this week?

Prayer: O God, regardless of our age, may we seek you with all our heart as we continue our Lenten journey. Amen.

TUESDAY, MARCH 23

Praise be to you, LORD;
teach me your decrees.
With my lips I recount
all the laws that come from your mouth.
I rejoice in following your statutes
as one rejoices in great riches.

Psalm 119:12-14

My wife and I love to go birding. Truth be told, I just love the walk. The other day, it was cold and raining. We tried to walk but decided a drive was a better option. The potential for bird watching was very limited, and the walk was virtually impossible. Where was joy to be found? We stopped in Arcadia and observed a pond. Overhead, an eagle was soaring toward his catch for the day, and my wife caught his descent. Truth is, you never know when joy will come!

Prayer: Dear Lord, help us always to look to you with expectant hearts and open minds as we enjoy every day in this precious world you created. Amen.

Bob Auld
(retired) Summit Baptist Church, Greene

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24

I meditate on your precepts
and consider your ways.
I delight in your decrees;
I will not neglect your word.

Psalm 119:15-16

When I was young, the church endowed me with a faith in God and numerous beliefs. As I grew, I found many of my beliefs no longer served me well, and I was forced to discard or amend them. But, with every rising sun and new season, with each new gift of life and expression of love, I saw God's presence, and hence, the faith nurtured in me by my known and unknown mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers deepened. And there it resides, growing ever deeper and stronger in my soul.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the individuals you have placed in my life who have honed my beliefs and strengthened my faith. Please help me to walk humbly with all those on this journey as we deepen our faith in God and our love for the world and all her occupants. Amen.

Susan Lepore
First Baptist Church in America, Providence

THURSDAY, MARCH 25

Open for me the gates of the righteous;
I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.
This is the gate of the LORD
through which the righteous may enter.
I will give you thanks, for you answered me;
you have become my salvation.

Psalm 118:19-21

I can still remember the look of the office where our adult Bible class was held on the day many years ago when I suddenly “got it”—I *knew* that I was saved by Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross. I can’t remember just what the leader said or did, but what college classes and debates about “works vs. faith” couldn’t achieve finally became reality for me. I always knew that my works would fall short, but I wasn’t clear on what I had to do—*nothing*, just believe!

Prayer: Blessed Lord Jesus, thank you for your sacrifice for me. Please help me to serve you as an act of worship and love; help me to honor you through my “works,” as I am secure in my salvation because of your amazing grace. Amen.

Donna Sherman
Warwick Central Baptist Church, Warwick

FRIDAY, MARCH 26

The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
the LORD has done this,
and it is marvelous in our eyes.
The LORD has done it this very day;
let us rejoice today and be glad.

Psalm 118:22-24

It was in college that my faith was questioned, and I prayed every night, “Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief.” I stopped going to church until my neighbor, smart Mickey Hall, knowing how I loved to sing invited me to join the First Baptist Church in America’s choir without joining the church. But I soon got excited about the work of the Mission Committee and wanted to participate. Then I read Marcus Borg’s book *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*, and I learned that the original Greek meaning of the word *believe* meant *give your heart to*.

Did I give my heart to Jesus? Yes, I did. The song I sang with all my heart was “Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart!” I believe that the purpose of the church is to be the hands of Jesus working in the world today. I also believe that the most important commandment is “Love One Another!”

Prayer: Dear Lord, help me to be more like Jesus every day, to be more loving, more helpful to those in need, more accepting of those who have different ideas, to remember everyone is a child of God. Amen.

Elsa Grieder
First Baptist Church in America, Providence

SATURDAY, MARCH 27

Since my youth, God, you have taught me,
and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds.
Even when I am old and gray,
do not forsake me, my God,
till I declare your power to the next generation,
your mighty acts to all who are to come.

Psalm 71:17-18

For what spiritual lesson am I most grateful?

God can save you, but he can also keep you.

How has my faith changed as I've grown older?

I put all my trust in God. I thank God for wisdom and more understanding.

How might I express joy sometime this week?

I look up to God's amazing grace, which keeps me singing all the time, and I show kindness to others.

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for keeping me and not forsaking me until I have shown your strength to this generation and your power to everyone that is to come. Amen.

Deacon Dwight Purcell
Community Baptist Church, Newport

PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 28

The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting,

“Hosanna!”

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

“Blessed is the king of Israel!”

Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written:

“Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion;

see, your king is coming,

seated on a donkey’s colt.”

John 12:12-15

A quote attributed to the late Rev. William Sloane Coffin reads: “Faith is not belief without proof, it is trust without reservation.” I respectfully disagree . . . kind of. You see, for me, as I have aged through too many decades to think about, a transition has taken place.

Through life experiences and physical changes and challenges, I have grown to understand that the path God has set for me hasn’t changed. How I look at having faith to understand that has. Questioning doesn’t go away but enables faith to be strengthened and transformed to “trust without reservation.” What a glorious journey it is!

Prayer: Lord, thank you for walking with us on this journey of faith and being ever present as we negotiate the path set before us. Amen.

Robert Butzier
Oak Lawn Community Baptist Church, Cranston
