



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
OF VIENNA



# RESURRECTION

L I F E   B E Y O N D   T H E   G R A V E

2024 LENTEN  
DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Dr. Vernon C. Walton, Senior Pastor

# Scripture Readings at a Glance

<i>Day</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Scripture</i>
<b>Day 1</b>	<b>February 14</b>	<b>1 John 2: 3-6</b>
Day 2	February 15	Ephesians 1: 9-10
Day 3	February 16	John 17: 3
Day 4	February 17	Proverbs 2:1-5
<b>Day 5</b>	<b>February 19</b>	<b>Matthew 25:41</b>
Day 6	February 20	1 John 1:9
Day 7	February 21	Isaiah 43:18-19
Day 8	February 22	Galatians 2:20-21
Day 9	February 23	2 Corinthians 5:17-18
Day 10	February 24	Romans 2:7
Day 11	February 26	Psalms 62:1
<b>Day 12</b>	<b>February 27</b>	<b>Philippians 4:6</b>
Day 13	February 28	John 16:33
Day 14	February 29	1 Peter 5:7
Day 15	March 1	Jeremiah 39:18
Day 16	March 2	Colossians 1:24
Day 17	March 4	Romans 8:28
<b>Day 18</b>	<b>March 5</b>	<b>Philippians 1:6</b>
Day 19	March 6	2 Peter 1:10-11
Day 20	March 7	Hebrews 12: 1-2
Day 21	March 8	1 Thessalonians 5:17
Day 22	March 9	1 Corinthians 9:24-27
<b>Day 23</b>	<b>March 11</b>	<b>John 15:5</b>
Day 24	March 12	Psalms 63:1
Day 25	March 13	James 4:8
Day 26	March 14	Matthew 6:33
Day 27	March 15	Jeremiah 29:13
Day 28	March 16	Deuteronomy 6:5
<b>Day 29</b>	<b>March 18</b>	<b>Philippians 3:13-14</b>
Day 30	March 19	Psalms 101:3
Day 31	March 20	Job 17:1
Day 32	March 21	Proverbs 4:25
Day 33	March 22	Acts 20:24
Day 34	March 23	Hebrews 12:1
<b>Day 35</b>	<b>March 25</b>	<b>Isaiah 40:31</b>
Day 36	March 26	2 Corinthians 5:17
Day 37	March 27	Romans 6:4
Day 38	March 28	Ephesians 4:22-24
Day 39	March 29	1 Peter 1:3
Day 40	March 30	Colossians 3:23-24





**Dr. Vernon C. Walton**  
*Senior Pastor*



Dear First Family,

Grace and Peace from God Our Father!

Each year during the season of Lent I am intentional about reflecting on Christ's great sacrifice for you and me. After even a brief period of self-reflection, I cannot help but give thanks to God for the grace he extended to me through the gift of his son.

As Christians, we sometimes fail to consider what the resurrection means for our daily lives. Not only is the resurrection is the cornerstone of our faith, but we have power as a result of it. Indeed, there is life beyond the grave!

Invite you to join me as we spend the next 40 days on a journey to the cross. Along the way, we will be intentional about removing some things from our lives and adding others. As we move through this journey together, I am looking forward to the ways in which God will stretch us and cause us to grow. Most importantly, it is my prayer that each of us will be able to declare the words found in Philippians 3:10, "I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death," (NLT)

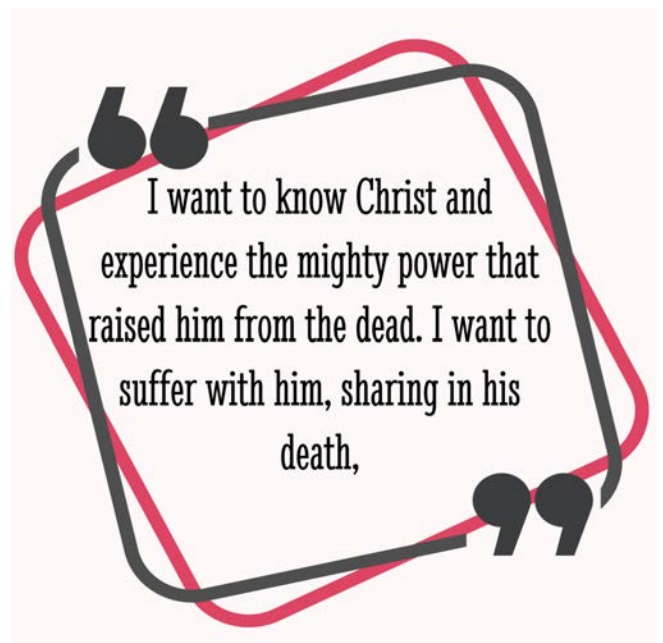
Please take some time to review the resources included in this year's Lenten Guide. You will find weekly readings, daily scriptures, and devotional readings written by our associate ministers and other Christian authors. You will also find guidelines for our 2024 fast.

I am convinced that if we commit to spending these next forty days seeking God, that He will do a powerful work in us individually and as a community of faith!

In Anticipation,  
Pastor Walton

## Resources for Lent Included in this Guide

- Fast Outline
- Daily Scripture Readings
- Devotional Readings
- Daily (Monday - Friday) Prayer Calls
- Mid-week Morning Devotion
- Mid-week Worship



# 2024 Lenten Season

- "Lent is not something we do *for* God - Lent is something we do *with* God."  
- Unknown

## Sacrifice: The Fast

- **Meatless Mondays + 1**
  - Do not eat meat of any kind on Mondays + one additional day of your choice
- Avoid all sweets & fried foods throughout the fast
- After prayer, identify one thing you will give up for the next 40 days

## Sacrifice: The Asks

- Commit to the fast
- Commit to the tithe (if you already tithe, commit to giving above 10% during Lent)
- Commit to making worship and ministry engagement a priority

## Seeking

- Minimally commit to 15 minutes of Daily Solitude
  - This is time intentionally set aside to spend with God
- Commit to Private *and* Corporate Prayer Time
  - Join us M-F @ 12 Noon and Wednesdays @ 7:00 AM  
605-313-5111 Code: 291598
  - Commit to Mid-Week worship or other opportunity for study

## Serving

- Commit to serving in a ministry at FBCV
- Commit to our **Weekly Acts of Kindness** Challenges - each week, we will write or send encouraging cards or letters to designated groups including:



Sick &amp; Shut In



Ministry Partners



Youth &amp; College Students



More!



Pastor Walton &amp; Staff

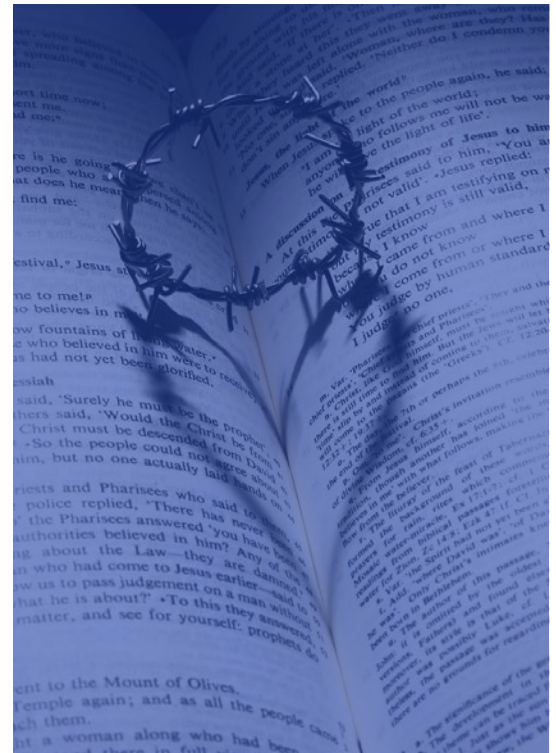
# Prayers for the Season

— "Lent is the season in which we ought to be surprised by joy. Our self-sacrifices serve no purpose unless, by laying aside this or that desire, we are able to focus on our heart's deepest longing: unity with Christ. In him-- in his suffering and death, his resurrection and triumph, we find our truest joy." - C.S. Lewis

Consider incorporating the themes below in your daily prayer times:



- God's Grace
- Drawing Close to God
- Fellowship with God
- Thankful Heart
- Remove Distraction
- Guard My Words
- Keep Me from Sin
- Let Me See Those in Need
- God Knows Me
- Trusting God
- The Love of God
- Brokenness
- Remember My Purpose
- Unburden Me
- Surrendering to God
- A Holy Offering
- Look to the Light
- I Am Loved
- A Call to Mercy
- Lay Down Burdens
- Forgive Me



# We Can Know Christ

1

to Abide in Him

John 15:5

10

to Have Great Contentment in God

Joshua 1:9

9

to Have Great Boldness for God

Proverbs 28:1.

2

to Know the Father

John 8:19

8

to Have Great Energy for God

Psalm 84:2

3

to Share His Sufferings

Romans 8:11

7

to Grow in Knowledge

John 10:10

4

to Recognize His Voice

John 10:27

5

to Have Eternal Life

John 17:3

6

to Grow in Grace

2 Peter 3:17-18

**To Know  
Christ  
Is...**

— “This Week:

Day 1:

Read: 1 John 2:3-6

Day 2:

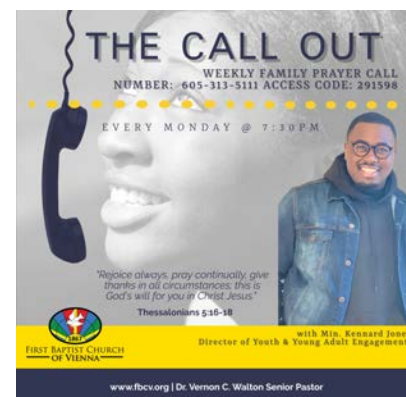
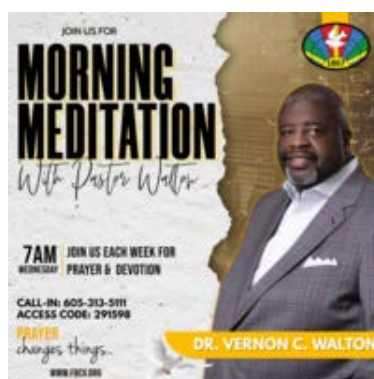
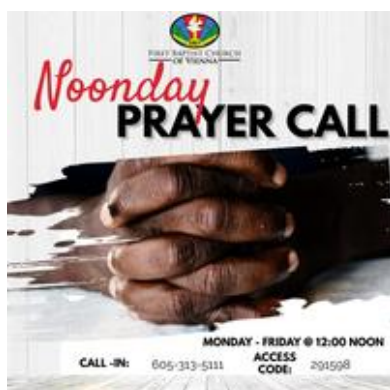
Read: Colossians 1:9-10

Day 3:

Read: John 17:3

Day 4

Read Proverbs 2:1-5



# BECAUSE OF THE RESURRECTION WE CAN KNOW CHRIST

— *Romans 14:11*

The apostle Paul gave up everything; family, friendship, and political freedom in order to know Christ and His resurrection power. We too have access to this knowledge and this power, but we may have to make sacrifices to enjoy it fully.

What are you willing to give up in order to know Christ? A few minutes a day for prayer and Bible study? Your friend's approval? Whatever it is, knowing Christ is more than worth the sacrifices.

When we are united with Christ by trusting in Him, we experience the power that raised him from the dead. That same mighty power helps us to live morally renewed and regenerated lives. Before we can walk in the newness of life, we must also die to sin and be made conformable unto his death. Just as the resurrection gives us His power to live for Him, His crucifixion marks the death of our sinful nature. Just as Christ was exalted after His resurrection, so we will one day share in Christ's glory. Paul knew he might die soon, but he had faith that he would be raised to life again.

We must forget about the past sins of which we are ashamed and look toward the future. We don't have to live in the tension of what we have been and what we want to be because our hope is in Christ. We can let go of the past guilt and look to the future of what God will help us to become. Don't dwell on your past, instead grow in the knowledge of God by concentrating on your relationship with Christ. Know that you are forgiven and then move on to a life of faith and obedience. Look forward toward a fuller and more meaningful life because of your hope in Christ Jesus.

God gave up His son so that you and I can live for eternity. He did not spare his only son, but sent Him into a dark, cruel world to die for our sins. It was a rescue operation for mankind. Man did not know he needed to be rescued. Man needed someone to die for his sins and that was the son of Man, which was Jesus Christ. God rescued man so that he would have and live the abundant life. That life is in Christ Jesus. Jesus [h1]went to the cross to suffer, bleed, and die. He took your punishment which is the wrath of a Holy God. This was done so that you and I can be made perfect to stand before a holy and righteous God. This was done so that we can spend eternity with God. This is life beyond the grave! This is heaven!

Jesus became poor so that we can become rich in Him. But that is not the end of the story on the third day of the week He got up and declared all authority, all power has been given to me that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow on earth and under the earth and in Heaven and that every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father.

There is an old hymn with these words: **"Because he lives, I can face tomorrow. Because He lives all fear is gone. Because I know, he holds the future and life is worth the living just because lives. God sent his son, they called Him Jesus. He came to love, heal, and forgive. He lived and died, to buy my pardon. An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives."**





# Power Over Suffering

## ALTAR

— This Week:

Day 11

Read: Psalm 62:1

Day 12

Read: Philippians 4:6

Day 13

Read: John 16:33

Day 14

Read: 1 Peter 5:7

Day 15

Read: Jeremiah 39:18

Day 16

Read: Colossians 1:24

Ask God to take it - pray

Let it go

Trust Him with it

Accept it's not yours to carry

Release it

*Turn problems into Praise!*

Through the practice of *Passionate Worship*, we learn to love God in return. We practice listening to Go, allowing God to shape our hearts and minds through prayer, personal devotion, and community worship.



# BECAUSE OF THE RESURRECTION WE CAN KNOW POWER OVER SUFFERING

— Romans 8:15-18

As we journey through the Lenten season, we are reminded of the sacrifice and suffering Jesus endured for us. It is a time for us to reflect, repent, and pursue a deeper understanding of the sacrifice made for our salvation. It is also a time for us to consider our own sufferings and how they can be transformed through the power of the resurrection.

In Romans 8:15-18, the apostle Paul reminds us that we are God's children and have been adopted into the family of God through the redeeming work of Christ. We are the sons and daughters of God who are able to "Abba, Father" confidently and assuredly as heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

It is that confidence that we should carry with us in our struggles. Being children of God does not exempt us from experiencing life's pain, trouble, and trials. The hymnologist boldly declared that Jesus knows all about our struggles. He knows because he endured trouble too. He endured pain too. He endured heartache too. This is why Paul teaches us that our suffering with Christ gives us access to glory with him. This is a profound truth that we must hold on to, especially during times of trial and tribulation. What issues we are experiencing now cannot and will not compare to the glory we will experience on the other side of them.

As Jesus prayed in anguish, in the Garden of Gethsemane, he knew there was great physical and emotional pain ahead. Just as any of us would, prayed that he would not have to experience it. However, he had a nevertheless mentality. He understood that whatever he was about to experience would not compare with the glory of God that would come from his suffering. So must we look to Jesus as our example. He is the author and the finisher of our faith. Therefore, because of resurrection, we *can* know power over suffering.

Christ's resurrection is the ultimate symbol of victory over suffering and death. It is a beautiful reminder that God's power is at work in us, enabling us to overcome all obstacles and trials. Through the resurrection, we have hope for a future where all suffering will be transformed into glory. This is the promise that sustains us, empowers us, and gives us the strength to endure.

So as we continue our Lenten journey, let us fix our eyes on the hope of resurrection. Let us remember that our present sufferings are but a small part of the greater story of God's redemptive work in the world. And let us take comfort in the fact that as children of God, we have been granted the power to rise above our sufferings and share in the glory that is to come.

May the Spirit of sonship within us continue to testify to God's love and faithfulness, and may it empower us to live confidently in the knowledge that whatever we are going through, there will be glory after it!

” **The next time  
Satan reminds  
you of your past,  
remind him of his  
future.**  
— *Unknown*



# Power Over Our Past

— This Week:

Day 5

Read: Matthew 25:41

Day 6

Read: 1 John 1:9

Day 7

Read: Isaiah 43:18-19

Day 8

Read: Galatians 2:20-21

Day 9

Read: 2 Corinthians 5:17-18

Day 10

Read: Romans 2:7

## When God Uses Your Past to Shape the Future

Do you believe that God uses your past? All of us have a history... victories, defeats, regrets, sorrows, joys, achievements... and the list goes on. For some of us, we take great joy in our past and our memories. For others, we try to escape the past or forget about it all together. And for many of us still, we fall somewhere in the middle between joyfully looking back at some parts and trying to forget others. But the truth is that your past has shaped you into who you are today. Good and bad, you are who you are because of your experiences.

The most spectacular and life-altering experience a person can go through is that of becoming a Christ follower. When you encounter the love of God and have the Holy Spirit transform you by His grace and power, you will never be the same. This is exactly what the Apostle Paul experienced in the Bible. Once a Pharisee who actually persecuted Christians, God transformed him as only He can. And even though Paul hated his past and called himself the "worst of sinners," God demonstrated His grace and power as He used Paul's past to shape the future of Christianity.

Paul was an expert at Holy Spirit transformations. After all, he was the product of one. While he most likely didn't kill any Christians by his own hands, he was certainly influential as a Jewish religious leader in the deaths of many Christ followers before his conversion. He believed he was doing "God's work" by exterminating those who followed who he believed to be a false messiah. Fast forward to when he met Jesus on the road to Damascus through a life-changing vision.

Paul couldn't escape his past. People were undoubtedly afraid of him now that he was confessing Christ as his Lord. Was his conversion story simply a trick to gain the trust of Christians? Paul had to live with the fact that he had persecuted those who were following his Savior. And he also had to cope with the fact that many Christians probably didn't trust him. If I know one thing about the enemy, it's that he loves to use our past against us. He most likely threw Paul's past in his face any time he had the chance.

But here's the truth about Paul's past... God didn't just choose Paul in spite of his past, He used Paul BECAUSE of his past.

Paul had the knowledge of a Pharisee. He knew the Scriptures forwards and backwards. This would become extremely useful in speaking with those who needed to be convinced that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah of the Old Testament.

Paul represented the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Paul wasn't a "good guy" who accepted Jesus into his life. By his own definition, he was the worst of all sinners. It was because of his influence that Stephen became the first recorded martyr in the book of Acts. If God can change the heart of a man like him, He can change anyone.

It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. – 1 Timothy 1:15-16

Paul would not have been the Apostle he was without his past. His past no longer defined him, God did. But God used his past to shape him into the man he would become. Instead of running from his past, Paul used it to his advantage. And while the enemy probably looked on with victory and pride as Paul persecuted the earliest Christians, God turned this into a defeat for the enemy when Paul's past as a religious leader gave him an advantage when teaching about Jesus as the Messiah.

God uses your past to fulfill His plans for the future. Because He who began a good work in you, will be faithful to finish it.

# BECAUSE OF THE RESURRECTION WE CAN KNOW POWER OVER OUR PAST

— Philippians 3:14-15

The year of 2023 was a year and season of pandemic, polarization and politics. Some of us were stretched at every level due to pressures of the times we lived in and continue to live in. Therefore, the question for us is: Are we pushed by our past problems or pulled through the power ahead of us?

In order to move forward in turbulent times, we must become reconcilers because of the resurrection through Jesus Christ. We have been reconciled with ourselves and the world. Any of the messes and misfortunes we allowed ourselves to engage in are now forgiven through the blood of Jesus Christ, who hung on the cross for our sins. "But God commendeth His love toward us, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." *Romans 5:8 NJV*

Therefore, as we move through the Lenten Season, like the Apostle Paul, our goal is striving daily for perfection in the midst of our past trials and tribulations knowing we have not reached the goal yet.

The Apostle Paul was not faultless nor any of us that are a part of God's family. However, we do stay in the race ahead on this spiritual journey.

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past." *Isiah 43:18 KJV*

Because of the resurrection, we stop spending too much energy concerning our past. We have been given power to walk on serpents (paraphrased). Lean on the Holy Spirit for guidance with our thoughts and actions forgiving ourselves of mistakes we made or inflicted on others, incumbent upon each of us as believers of the faith to strive for the prize of heaven.

Hail storms, wind storms and snow storms can disrupt our lives. Darkness can invade our thoughts on many occasions. However, as believers of Christ, we must put on the whole armor of God offering peace and forgiveness to ourselves and the people of the world. We then become examples of what it looks like reconciled in Jesus Christ.

We, the believers, have to manifest God's presence in our daily walk as we portray the light and love of God's creation in our lives that give hope for the least, last and lost today and in the future. We do have the power in us.

"The power of God cannot be limited by our past circumstances. The power of God is an unshakeable tower which humanity (we) can rely on. The power of God is sufficient to empower anyone for a prosperous future."

- Gift Gugu Mona

Moving through this Lenten Season, remember:

Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended, but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." *Philippians 3:13,14 NKJV*

"Don't give the enemy a seat at your table. It's time to win the battle of your mind."

Louie Giglio



# The Prize of the High Calling

## Those Things Which Are Behind

by Jack Hayford

There is something about that call to press toward the mark that captures the vision of the ancient Olympic racecourse five centuries before Christ. Paul uses the language of the athletic field of competition, exhorting us to press forward, while calling us to forget that which is behind—our past fears, our past focus, and our past failures.

We are called to new faith that overcomes fear. Fears will trail you with the lying forecast that you can't make it. Fears are today's lies about tomorrow's promise. Fears are denials of hope rooted in doubts about God's power, presence, promise, and workings. God always offers us the guarantee of His presence, and that's enough to cast fears aside. The timeless rule for every runner in every race is, don't look back.

We are called to new values that overcome self. Press in for values that overrule self. Focus personal goals only on serving others, not your own convenience. It was 13 years into my own ministry before I discovered that I wasn't to be concerned about my own goals, but I was to make my goal the service of what God wants to do in other people. Give your life away because to save it, you will inevitably lose it. To find your life is to lay it down—first at the feet of Jesus and then in the face of the challenges of your life. Our high calling is to a new value—to serve others in the wisdom of the Lord's way.

We are called to great grace that overcomes failure. Don't give up! We are called to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us...[to] run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:1, 2). The One who calls you has already won. Keep your eyes on Him... even if you stumble, He will carry you on.

Day 17

Read: Romans 8:28

Day 18

Read: Philippians 1:6

Day 19

Read: 2 Peter 1:10-11

Day 20

Read: Hebrews 12:1-2

Day 21

Read: 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Day 22

Read: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

“

**I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**

Philippians 3:14 (NKJV)

”



# BECAUSE OF THE RESURRECTION WE CAN KNOW THE PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING

— *Philippians 3:14-15*

Throughout the New Testament, Paul speaks of pressing on toward the goal and the prize for which God has called him heavenward. Although the verses themselves don't mention the resurrection, they speak to the power of God's assurance of eternal life, and the transformative impact of Christ's resurrection on the lives of believers.

The Resurrection can be seen as a "high calling" because it involves striving to embody the values and teachings of Jesus, and to live in a way that reflects the hope and joy that comes from the belief in his Resurrection. This might include seeking to live a life of love, compassion, forgiveness, and service to others as well as sharing the message of hope found in the resurrection with those around us. Through his victory over sin and death, he has opened the way for us to experience new life and to live in the fullness of grace.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a central and profound event in Christian belief, symbolizing victory over sin and death and offering hope for believers. In Christian devotional practice, the resurrection is often meditated upon as a source of spiritual insight and understanding.

"The prize of the high calling," is often associated with the concept of spiritual rewards and the idea that believers are called to a higher purpose or destiny. This concept is based on various passages in the New Testament, such as Philippians 3:14, where the apostle Paul speaks of pressing toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. The resurrection of Jesus Christ provides believers with hope and assurance that they are called to a higher spiritual purpose and that there is a "prize" or reward awaiting them in the life to come.

## *A Prayer for Today*

Father, we thank you for your incredible sacrifice on the cross and for the victory of your Resurrection. You triumphed over death, giving us hope and a high calling to live as followers. We are grateful for your love and the new life we have in you.

We ask you, Father, to help us live in a manner worthy of the calling. We ask for the perseverance to press on toward the goal called the prize of the high calling, by the power of your resurrection that lives in us.

We offer a prayer of thanksgiving and commitment to live for that day when we will receive a crown. We ask that you give us the strength to stand firm on your Holy Words.

We lift our hands in worship and bless your Holy name, for you deserve the glory and honor. For our sins you marched to Calvary with a heart of mercy and grace, never considering our sins. We pray for the strength to walk boldly in obedience to your calling.

**In Jesus Name we pray,  
Amen.**

# Spiritual Intimacy

— "Intimacy with God is available to you. It is as accessible to you as God's promises. And God's invitation to you to enjoy intimate fellowship with him is that thing that is putting your faith to the test more than anything else."

Intimacy is what we call the experience of really knowing and being known by another person. We frequently use spatial language when describing this experience. An intimate friend is someone we feel very *close* to; they know us at a *deep* level. If something happens that damages the intimacy with our friend, they feel *distant* from us. Or a person who doesn't know us intimately knows us at a *superficial* level. But of course intimacy is not spatial but relational. We all know what it's like to be sitting right next to a person with whom we feel *distant* and we can feel *close* to a person who is four thousand miles away.

"Biblical knowledge is far better than gold when it fuels our trust in God. Otherwise, it only fuels our pride."

What makes us feel intimate with another person? While there are many ingredients to intimacy and each intimate relationship we have has a different recipe, common to all of them is trust. We cannot be intimate with a person we don't trust.

Trust is at the heart of intimacy. The more we trust someone, the *closer* we let them get to us. The degree to which trust is compromised in a relationship is the degree to which intimacy evaporates.

This is as true in our relationship with God as it is in our relationships with other human beings. Our experience of God's *nearness* or *distance* is not a description of his actual proximity to us, but of our experience of intimacy with him. Scripture shows us that God is intimate with those who trust him. The more we trust God, the more intimately we come to know him. A felt distance from God is often due to a disruption in trust, such as a sin or disappointment.

This reality is vitally important to understand. As Christians, we want to experience intimacy with God. With the psalmist we say, "for me it is good to be near God" (Psalm 73:28). And we want to heed James's exhortation and realize its promise: "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you" (James 4:8). But we can seek that nearness in ways that don't produce it.

One common mistake is thinking that nearness to God can be achieved through knowledge accumulation. Now, of course, to intimately know God, we must know crucial things about God. Jesus said, "you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32) and he pointed out that many worship what they do not know (John 4:22).

But never in the history of the Christian church has so much theological knowledge been available to so many people as it is today. The American church enjoys perhaps the greatest amount of this abundance. We are awash in Bible translations, good books, insightful articles, recorded sermons, interviews, movies, documentaries, music, and more. And much of it very good. It is right for us to be very thankful.

But America is not abounding in Enochs (or finding them frequently disappearing), saints who walk with God in a profoundly intimate way (Genesis 5:24; Hebrews 11:5). Why? Because knowledge is not synonymous with trust. That's why Jesus said to the religious leaders of his day, some who possessed an encyclopedic knowledge of Scripture,

"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life." (John 5:39–40)

Biblical knowledge is far better than gold when it fuels our trust in God, because it fuels our intimacy with God (Psalm 19:10). But when biblical knowledge replaces our trust in God, it only fuels our pride (1 Corinthians 8:1).

# BECAUSE OF THE RESURRECTION WE CAN KNOW SPIRITUAL INTIMACY

— *Philippians 3:10*

Just before the crucifixion of the Christ, after ~3 years in ministry alongside the Messiah, the disciples are faced with some disturbing news. Jesus tells them, “It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper (*Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor—Counselor, Strengtheners, Standby*) will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him (the Holy Spirit) to you [to be in close fellowship with you].” (**John 16:7, AMP**).

Just for a moment, imagine the grief that filled their hearts, the anguish and confusion. After three years, their relationship with Jesus seemed to be coming to an abrupt end. Yes, they’d seen him turn water to wine, raise the dead, heal the sick but also, they’d come to know Jesus as brother, as friend, as confidant. He saw them for who they were and He loved them in spite of. He ate with them, He traveled with them, He was transparent/open with them and they with Him. Even more, He imparted wisdom to them, he elevated their thinking as well as their spiritual connection to the Father.

Can you even imagine a personal relationship with Jesus in the flesh, walking and talking, making eye contact, seeing facial expressions, enjoying laughs together — all while learning more about the Father and helping people? What an experience that must have been for them that was to suddenly end; and then, for their best friend to say, “It is to your advantage that I go away”. *How heartbreaking!*

I suspect they didn’t hear much else after that part. I would even surmise they couldn’t possibly process the promise of the Holy Spirit that He gave. And I’m almost certain they missed the part about how the Holy Spirit could be all that Jesus was to them (*and arguably more*). After all, who could replace a friend like Jesus? But He goes on to say:

**12 “There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can’t bear it now. 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. 14 He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. 15 All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, ‘The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.’ (John 16: 12-15, NLT)**

Hard to fathom, but what was lost in physical interaction, was more than gained in the spiritual interaction and connectivity that they would come to experience. Perhaps they wouldn’t hear His footsteps alongside theirs any more but that didn’t mean they would walk alone. And perhaps, it was frightful to think they’d never hear His voice again, but that didn’t mean He’d stop speaking.

And as modern day disciples of Jesus, we can know spiritual intimacy in the same way. For we have a Comforter who sees us, knows us, understands, hears us, goes with us, guides us, advocates for us and more. In fact, His primary role is to be the conduit for the relationship and the fellowship that our Heavenly Father always wanted with us from the very moment when he suggested, “Let Us make man in Our image”. (**Gen 1:26, KJV**)

Therefore, take comfort that every time you read His Word, everytime you enter into worship, and everytime you pray... it is you interacting with Jesus, by way of the Holy Spirit. It is your way of calling on Him without the use of a telephone, as though He were right there with you, walking and talking... because He is.



# Lenten Readings

## Spiritual Intimacy

Day 23  
Read: John 15:5

Day 24  
Read: Psalm 63:1

Day 25  
Read: James 4:8

Day 26  
Read: Matthew 6:33

Day 27  
Read: Jeremiah 29:13

Day 28  
Read: Deuteronomy 6:5

## Foward Focus

Day 29  
Read: Philippians 3:13-14

Day 30  
Read: Psalm 101:3

Day 31  
Read: Job 17: 1

Day 32  
Read: Proverbs 4:25

Day 33  
Read: Acts 20:24

Day 34  
Read: Hebrews 12:1



### PRAY

M-F Prayer Calls  
Wednesday Morning Meditations  
Seasonal/Special Corporate Prayer Times



### READ THE BIBLE

Weekly Scripture Readings  
Seasonal Devotionals



### ATTEND WORSHIP

In-Person @ 10 AM on Sundays  
Mid-Week Worship



### CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Connection Groups  
Mid-Day/Mid-Week Bible Study  
CLA, Youth Church



### STEWARDSHIP

Time – Giving of Your Time to the Ministry  
Talent – Using your gifts & talents in ministry  
Treasure – Minimally committing to the tithe



### EVANGELISM

Inviting Others to Worship  
Sharing the Good News with Others



# BECAUSE OF THE RESURRECTION WE CAN KNOW LIFE ANEW

— *Colossians 3:23-24*

In the quiet moments of Lent, we find ourselves drawn to the heart of the Christian faith—the Resurrection. John 11:25 encapsulates the profound truth that defines our hope and transforms our existence: "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die."

Jesus uttered these words in the poignant context of Lazarus' death. He stood before Martha, a grieving sister, and spoke not just to her pain but to a universal reality we all face—death. Yet, within this declaration lies the heartbeat of our faith: Because of the Resurrection, we can know life anew.

Our Lenten journey begins by acknowledging the inevitability of death. Jesus didn't shy away from it; instead, He faced it head-on. Reflect on the reality of death in your life. What fears, anxieties, or uncertainties does it evoke? In prayer, surrender these concerns to Christ, remembering that because of the Resurrection, death is not the end.

Jesus didn't merely speak about life; He claimed to be the Resurrection and the Life. As we reflect on His words, let's embrace the promise of new life. Ponder the areas in your life that need resurrection—relationships, dreams, or aspects of your spiritual journey. Through prayer and trust, invite Jesus to breathe new life into these areas, knowing that He is the source of true and abundant life.

The Resurrection is not a distant future event but a present reality. Consider how the truth of John 11:25 can impact your daily living. How can you live a resurrected life today, embodying the hope and joy found in Christ? Through intentional acts of kindness, forgiveness, and gratitude, allow the Resurrection to shape your interactions with others.

Let's cultivate a Resurrection perspective. The Resurrection changes how we view suffering, loss, and challenges. Meditate on 1 Corinthians 15:54-55, where death is swallowed up in victory. In prayer, ask God to help you see your circumstances through the lens of the Resurrection, trusting that He can bring beauty from ashes.

We rejoice in the truth of John 11:25. Because of the Resurrection, we can know life anew—life that transcends the limitations of this world. As we stand at the threshold of Easter, let the Resurrection be not just a historical event but a daily reality that infuses hope, purpose, and joy into every moment. May the assurance of life in Christ resonate in our hearts, transforming our lives and radiating hope to a world in need.



# Life Anew

## The New Life in Christ by Joyce Meyer

— “I am the vine, you are the branches.”  
John 15:5

Day 35

Read: Isaiah 40:31

Day 36

Read: 2 Corinthians 5:17

Day 37

Read: Romans 6:4

Day 38

Read: Ephesians 4:22-24

Day 39

Read: 1 Peter 1:3

Day 40

Read: Colossians 3:23-24

It's so amazing to realize that when we give our lives to Christ, He takes us just as we are and in exchange, gives us His nature, making us a new creation. It's just the beginning of a lifelong journey we take with Him to become everything God created us to be.

In this process, God doesn't give us a list of rules to follow and then stand on the sidelines watching us fail, but He gives us a new heart and then helps us do all that He has given us a desire to do.

We can learn to depend entirely on Jesus to give us right standing with God and to help us do what is right in His sight. We can form the habit of leaning on God in all things.

The cardinal guideline for the Christian who wants to be what God wants him to be is, *Apart from Me... you can do nothing* (John 15:5 AMP). Abide in Christ as the branch abides in the vine, continually receiving new life that produces new growth.

### Prayer Starter:

Lord, help me see myself the way You see me, as a new creature in You. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Ash Wednesday Worship

Wednesday, February 14, 2024

12:00 Noon

Lunch Served Following Worship!

## Easter Extravaganza Experience

Saturday, March 23, 2024

12:00 - 3:00 pm

Live Animals, Egg Hunt & More

## Palm Sunday Worship

Sunday, March 24, 2024

10:00 AM

## Holy Week Revival

Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday

March 25th, 26th, 27th

12:00 Noon

Lunch Served After Worship Daily

## Maundy Thursday Worship

Thursday, March 28, 2024

6:00 PM - Fellowship Hour

7:00 PM - Worship

## Resurrection Sunday Worship

Sunday, March 3, 2024

9:00 AM Easter Production

10:00 AM Morning Worship

*Opposed by no one*  
**FIFTEN WORSHIP**



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