



Lent 2024 Devotional

A personal worship and devotion for individuals, groups, & families

West End Presbyterian Church

THE MEANING OF LENT

adapted from "On Keeping A Holy Lent"

by Craig R. Higgins, Trinity Presbyterian Church (PCA), Rye, NY. See [our website](#) for more info on "The Meaning of Lent."

People from different religious backgrounds have very different reactions to the season of Lent. Some grow up in churches where Lent is observed, but with little to no real explanation. Whether observed as a time of strict austerity or merely as a time of forgoing a few simple pleasures, Lent may seem like an empty, meaningless ritual in such cases. On the other hand, some grow up in church traditions where Lent is not observed at all. These folks may think of Lenten observance as, at best, a hollow custom, or, at worst, quite foreign to authentic Christianity.

Lent, as a season of preparation, is traditionally focused on repentance. Speaking biblically, to repent means to make a change in our attitudes, words, and lifestyles. As 16th century reformer Martin Luther taught, the Christian life in its totality is a life of repentance. Beginning when we first trust Christ, and continuing throughout our lives, we are more and more turning away from sin and self-centeredness and more and more turning to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Even though a repentant spirit should mark all we do, it is still appropriate that certain times be set aside for a particular focus on repentance.

In much the same way, we celebrate the resurrection of Christ each Sunday, but especially at Easter; and while we should always thank God for the Incarnation, we especially celebrate it at Christmas. These periodic reminders keep us from becoming forgetful and imbalanced. The church has traditionally done this at the Lenten season (and, to a lesser extent, in the pre-Christmas season of Advent). **Lent, therefore, is a time for focusing on the heart, a time for asking questions about our spiritual health:**

- *What are my characteristic sins, and how can I pray for change?*
- *What idols have captured my imagination so that my love for the living God has grown cold?*
- *In what ways is my devotion to Christ and His church less than wholehearted?*

As we ask God for the grace to see and repent of our sin, this booklet is intended as a guide for devotional reading for individuals and groups or family worship during the Lenten season. For each week of Lent, there are Scripture readings, prayers of confession, hymns, and reflections on **the Savior who conquered sin and death.**

This year, the reflections focus on six different accounts from Scripture of turning to the LORD in repentance and receiving His grace. Each of these stories remind us to cry out to Jesus in our sin & neediness, trusting in His gracious and steadfast love as we prepare to celebrate His resurrection.

Compiled by Becca Wethered

All Scripture passages from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version.

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WEEK 1: SEEKING & SAVING the LOST

February 18th / ZACCHAEUS

“So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully.” Luke 19:6

READ: LUKE 19:1-10

¹He entered Jericho and was passing through. ²And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. ³And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. ⁴So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. ⁵And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.” ⁶So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. ⁷And when they saw it, they all grumbled, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.” ⁸And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.” ⁹And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

REFLECT

“Repentance is like saying you’re sorry to a friend after he has already run to you, embraced you, kissed you, and clung to you. There is nothing to hide, and nothing to fear.” –Gavin Ortlund

- Have you ever wanted to see someone so badly, you went to extreme lengths to make sure you did (*waiting in line at a concert, driving all night to get somewhere, jumping up and down in a crowd, etc.*)?
- Zacchaeus is a chief tax collector, and therefore a rich man (*The Romans farmed out the task of collecting the taxes in any particular area to the highest bidder. The man did not receive any salary for his work but collected as much money - from his own community - as he could so that he would have an income after paying the government the appointed sum*).

What kind of reputation might he have in this town? Why might Zacchaeus have felt the need to go see Jesus?

- During this season of Lent, we focus on asking Jesus to help us be quick to confess and repent of our sins. **Repentance means that we are turning away from our sin and turning towards Jesus, who welcomes us just as gladly as He did Zacchaeus.**
- As we look at this story of repentance, we can see that Zacchaeus **joyfully**, almost **with abandon**, hurries down from the tree and goes to Jesus. That joy then spurs him on to pay back all that he had stolen, and more (*The law required the amount plus a fifth to be paid – Zacchaeus was going far beyond what the law demanded!*) **When was a time you felt joy because you saw that your sins are forgiven? What gets in the way of this kind of repentance in your own life?**
- Because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, we now have no condemnation in Christ ([Romans 8:1](#)) – **if you trust Jesus, you will never be condemned or put to shame.** What a friend we have in Jesus!

PRACTICE

This coming week...

- Notice a moment you sin this week (*a lie you tell, coveting a relationship or possession someone else has, judging someone’s driving, etc.*) Practice confessing that sin to God, and as you repent, ask Jesus to give you **fresh joy because your sins are forgiven.**
- Share with someone you trust what the experience of confession & repentance was like.

PRAYER

God of mercy, whose Son, Jesus Christ, longs to gather us in the wide embrace of His love, we confess that we have been wayward children. We have disobeyed Your commands; our ears have been deaf to your call; our hearts have been cold to Your love. In thought, in word, and in deed we have hurt others and dishonored Your name. In Your great mercy receive us yet again as Your well-beloved children, not because we are worthy but for the sake of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. Amen.

SING: WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS

1. What a friend we have in Je - sus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
2. Have we trials and temp-ta - tions? — Is there trou-ble a - ny-where?
3. Are we weak and hea-vy la - den, cum - bered with a load of care?

What a pri - vi-lege to car - ry eve - ry-thing to God in prayer!
We should ne-ver be dis - cour - aged; take it to the Lord in prayer!
Pre - cious Sav-ior still our ref - uge— take it to the Lord in prayer!

Oh, what peace we of - ten for - feit, oh, what need-less pain we bear,
Can we find a friend so faith - ful who will all our sor-rows share?
Do thy friends des-pise, for - sake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer!

all be-cause we do not car - ry eve - ry-thing to God in prayer!
Je - sus knows our eve-ry weak - ness; take it to the Lord in prayer.
In his arms he'll take and shield thee; thou wilt find a so-lace there.

WEEK 2: LIVING WATER

February 25th / THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

“Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did.” John 4:29

READ: [JOHN 4:1-30, 39-42](#)

Early in Jesus’ ministry, the apostle John records that Jesus encounters a woman from Samaria. Jesus asks her for a drink from the well, and she is surprised that He would ask her because she is a Samaritan (*the Jews and Samaritans did not intermingle because of a different understanding of what it meant to be pure before God as well as division about how/where to worship Him, and many of the Jews hated the Samaritans*). Jesus tells the woman that God gives “living water” that springs up to eternal life, and the woman asks for that water. Then, Jesus asks her to call her husband, and reveals that He knows she has had many husbands, and is now living unmarried. Because of this revelation, she calls Jesus a prophet, and says that when the Messiah (the Savior) comes, He will tell us who and how to worship. Jesus then says the astounding declaration that He is the Messiah! The Samaritan woman is amazed that Jesus knew all that she had done, and yet offered this Living Water of eternal life. She can’t help but tell others about Him, asking the question “Is this the Christ (anointed one)?” Many others believed her testimony not only because of what he said about her, but also because they went to Him themselves, listened to His word, and believed that He is the Savior of the world.

REFLECT

*“Repentance is liberating and not crushing.”
–Tim Keller*

- What is something about yourself that you try to hide (*you’re bad at math, you eat two bowls of ice cream every night, you scroll social media for hours, etc..*)?

- Typically, the women would go together in the cool of the morning to draw water, but Jesus meets this woman alone during the hottest part of the day. Why might the people distance themselves from the woman (see [vv. 16-19](#))? **How might she view herself?**
- [Isaiah 55:1](#) says “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat!” If the Samaritans had been hated by the Jews, and this woman was shamed by her community, **what is it like for this woman to consider that this “living water (eternal life)” is for her, too?**
- Jesus tells the woman about her life, and she realizes she cannot hide from Him. **Have you ever tried to hide from God? How did it go?**
- The woman trusts Jesus is the Messiah, and boldly, now without shame, goes to her community and tells them about Jesus. **Part of repentance is trusting that Jesus fully covers our sin** – so much so, that we can confess our sins, without hiding, telling others how Jesus met us with His grace. We are so tempted to hide our sin & neediness - but **sharing our stories of sin, repentance, & grace gives Jesus a lot of glory!**

PRACTICE

This coming week...

- Share with a family member or friend about a time that you sinned and how Jesus met you with His grace. **How did you feel as you shared? How did they react?**
- Notice a moment you are trusting in something other than Jesus to satisfy you (*how much work you accomplish, what people think of you, food or drink, etc..*) **Ask Jesus for help to turn and see that He is the only One that really loves you and truly satisfies.**

PRAYER

Everlasting God, fountain of all life and the true home of every heart; our hearts are restless until they rest in You. Yet we confess that our hearts have been enslaved by selfish passion and base desire. We have sought after many things and have neglected the one thing needful. We have not loved You with our whole hearts; help us to turn to You and find forgiveness. Lead us home, that we may again find in You our life and joy and peace. Amen.

SING: COME YE SINNERS, POOR & NEEDY

1. Come, ye sin - ners, poor and need - y, Weak and wound-ed,
2. Come, ye thirst - y, come, and wel - come, God's free bount - y,
3. Let not con - science make you lin - ger, Nor of fit - ness
4. Come, ye wea - ry, heav - y lad - en, Lost and ru - ined
5. I will a - rise and go to Je - sus, He will em - brace me

12 G D G Em D C/E G
sick and sore; Je - sus read - y stands to save you,
glo - ri - fy; True be - lief and true re - pen - tance,
fond - ly dream; All the fit - ness He re - quir - eth
by the fall; If you tar - ry till you're bet - ter,
in His arms; In the arms of my dear Sav - ior,

15 Em C Em/B D Em (END: C)
Full of pit - y, love and pow'r.
Ev - - - ry grace feel - that brings you nigh.
Is to feel your er need of Him.
You will nev - er come at all.
O, there are ten thou - sand charms.

WEEK 3: YOUR GUILT IS TAKEN AWAY

MARCH 3rd / ISAIAH

“Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips... for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!” from Isaiah 6:5

READ: ISAIAH 6:1-7

¹In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ²Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” ⁴And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!” ⁶Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”

REFLECT

“Now I approach the throne, and I have confidence that Jesus my great High Priest, offered His blood and died for me.” –Isaac Watts

- Have you ever seen something that overwhelmed you (*a mountain top view, early morning sunrise, tall city skyscraper, etc..*)? How did you view yourself in that moment?
- In the beginning of this chapter, the prophet Isaiah describes an encounter he has with the Lord. **How does this passage describe God? How does Isaiah describe himself?**
- As soon as Isaiah sees the holiness of God, he is overcome by his own guilt and sin – his own neediness. **What does it feel like to confess our sin to God?**

How might acknowledging our neediness give God glory?

- If the story ended with being left in our sin, we would despair. But, in vv. 6-7, the seraphim takes a burning coal from the altar and touches Isaiah’s lips, symbolizing that he has been declared clean and pure, and can approach God. The altar is a symbol of purification by blood, fire, and the Spirit - Christ’s blood shed for us and Spirit living in us ([Romans 8:9](#)) is a way we see this ‘purifying’ in Christians today.
- Just as Isaiah was cleansed, Jesus, our great High Priest, intercedes for us ([Romans 8:34](#)) so we can approach God with confidence of His love. **Do you find it easy to approach God? Why or why not?**
- Part of repentance is **truly seeing your sin, and need of a Savior**. But seeing your sin is a scary thing – it can tempt you to shame (*I’m the worst*) or it can tempt you to try and justify yourself (*I’m not that bad...look at them!*) Both responses miss the beauty of the Gospel. It is when we see our sin, confess it to God, turn to Jesus – **His grace for us becomes even bigger, even more precious**. This season of Lent is a time **to turn again to Jesus, our great High Priest, in repentance and worship**.

PRACTICE

This coming week...

- **Do you struggle to see that you need God?** Ask the Holy Spirit to help you repent and help you to see your sin, so that you can see even more greatly your Savior who loves you.

PRAYER

Lord God, every day we are reminded that we fall short of Your glory: You are strong; we are blown about by every whim. You call for justice; we play favorites and prefer man-made comfort. You are holy through and through; our best efforts are marred by sin and cannot save us. Oh, how we need a Savior to ransom us from bondage to sin! Thank You for providing exactly what we need in Jesus. Oh, how we need continued renewal in Your image! Thank You for sending the Holy Spirit to continue Your work in your Church. Forgive us our sins, and lead us to rest in Your grace. Amen.

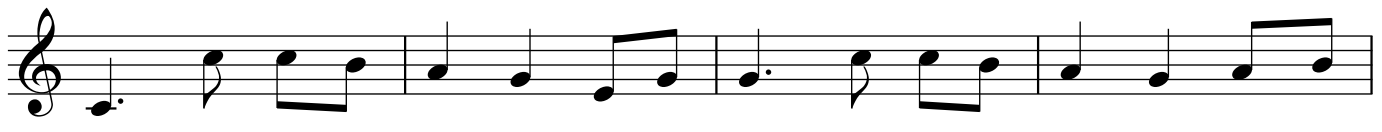
SING: BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD ABOVE



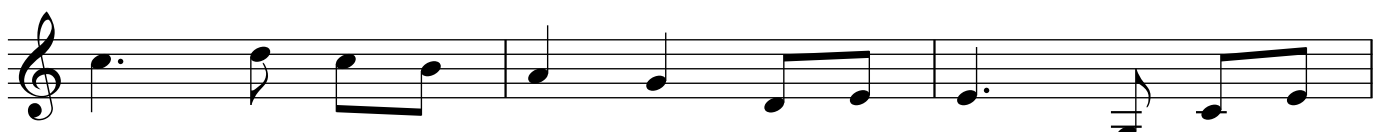
Be-fore the throne of God a - bove, I have a strong, a per - fect
When Sa - tan tempts me to de - spair, and tells me of the guilt with-
Be-hold Him there the ris - en Lamb, my per-fect, spot - less Right-eous-



plea, a great High Priest whose name is "Love," who ev - er lives and pleads for
in, up-ward I look and see Him there, who made an end to all my
ness, the great un change - a - ble I AM, the King of glo - ry and of



me. My name is gra - ven on His hands, my name is writ - ten on His
sin. Be-cause the sin - less Sav-ior died, my sin-ful soul is count-ed
grace! One with Him - self I can-not die, my soul is pur-chased by His



heart; I know that while in heav'n He stands, no tongue can
free; for God, the Just, is sat - is - fied, to look on
blood; My life is hid with Christ on high, with Christ, my



bid me thence de - part. No tongue can bid me thence de - part.
Him and par - don me. To look on Him and par - don me.
Sav - ior and my God. With Christ my Sav - ior and my God.

WEEK 4: FOLLOW ME

MARCH 10th / SIMON PETER

“Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ and he said to him, ‘Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.’” from John 21:17

READ: JOHN 21:15-19

¹⁵When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” ¹⁶He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” ¹⁷He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep. ¹⁸Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.” ¹⁹(This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, “Follow me.”

REFLECT

“The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.” –II Peter 3:9

- Think about a time someone called you out for doing something you know was wrong. How did you feel about yourself? About them?
- This passage comes from the last chapter of John, recorded soon after Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to his disciples. Jesus asks Peter three times, “do you love me?” **Why do you think Peter is grieved after Jesus asks him the third time?** (Hint: the last recorded words of Peter before Jesus’ death were Peter denying being a disciple of Jesus in [John 18:25-27](#)).

- Put yourself in Peter’s shoes, looking into the eyes of Jesus, whom he denied: it would be easy to beat yourself up, wallow in shame, justify your actions, or just ‘try to do better’ – but this is not true repentance. Peter was grieved by his sin – it should grieve him, as it grieves Jesus! But, the love of Christ compelled Peter to confess his love for Jesus, without shame, and reaffirm his calling to follow Him. **Jesus’ grace was greater than Peter’s betrayal – and it is big enough to cover whatever sin you are struggling with.**
- Protestant Reformer Martin Luther said that *“our Lord and Master Jesus Christ...willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.”* Though Peter denied Jesus, he also boldly confessed Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God in [Matthew 16:16-19](#). Moreover, Jesus declares that He will use Peter in the building of the church, and calls Peter now to shepherd His church (“my sheep”). **What does this interaction show us about the journey (and practice) of repenting?**
- Jesus is the greatest Shepherd – Peter could go on to serve and care for the early church because Jesus tenderly cares for him. **How have you seen Jesus to be a Good Shepherd in your life? Where is a place you’re struggling to believe that?**

PRACTICE

This coming week...

- Notice a moment you are tempted to despair of or justify your sin. **Ask Jesus to help you repent and believe that He is your Good Shepherd.**

PRAYER

Lord, we have denied You by refusing to know You. We have betrayed You by keeping our distance. We have mocked You by pretending we are not Yours. Lord, we are lost; let Your forgiveness find us. Welcome us into Your strong, forgiving arms and let us feel reconciled again. Amen.

SING: GRACE GREATER THAN OUR SIN

1. Mar - vel - ous grace of our lov - ing Lord
 2. Sin and de - spair like the sea - waves cold,
 3. Dark is the stain that we can - not hide
 4. Mar - vel - ous, in - fi - nite, match - less grace

Grace that ex - ceeds our sin and our guilt
 Threat - en the soul with in - fi - nite guilt
 What - can a - veil it a - loss?
 Free - ly be - stowed on all who be - lieve

You - der on Cal - va - ry's mount out - poured
 Grace that is great - er, yes grace un - told
 Look! There is flow - ing a crim - son tide
 You that are long - ing to see His face

There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt
 Points to er than this snow you ment His may be grace to - day
 Will you this mo - ment His grace re - ceive?

Chorus: Grace, grace, God's grace
 Grace that will par - don and cleanse with - in
 Grace, grace, God's grace
 Grace that is great - er than all our sin!

WEEK 5: MERCIFUL & JUST

MARCH 17th / DAVID

“A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” Psalm 51:10

READ: [2 SAMUEL 11-12:15, PSALM 51](#)

We read in 2 Samuel 11 that King David sends his men into battle with the Ammonites, but doesn't accompany them as king (which was the normal custom). Then, he sees a woman (Bathsheba) bathing from his rooftop and desires to have her as his own, though she is married, and once he has taken her, she becomes pregnant. Her husband comes home and David tries to manage his sin by making it appear that Bathsheba's husband is the father, yet his plans are thwarted and David chooses to send her husband, Uriah, into fatal battle to cover up his sin. Uriah dies faithfully in battle, and David takes Bathsheba as his wife. But God sends the prophet Nathan to expose David's sin, and calls what David has done as "evil in God's sight." We see in both 2 Samuel 12 & Psalm 51 that David is overcome because of his sin – he asks God to be merciful and show him steadfast love. David acknowledges his sin before God, asking for God to give him a clean heart and right spirit. David repents of his sin and receives God's mercy, but also receives the consequences of his actions - his child dies due to his terrible sin.

REFLECT

“We never repent of sin unless we are convinced it is of absolutely no value, in fact, that it gives birth to death.” –Kevin Greene

- Have you ever wanted something that another person has (*a toy, a relationship, a job*)? **What were you tempted to think about yourself? About that person? About God?**
- When we want something that is not ours, we are tempted to feel like we deserve it, and do whatever it takes to get it. David takes what he wants (a human being!), and when his secret is close to being exposed, he begins to lie and manipulate to try to cover it up. **Why does it feel easier to try to cover up our sin, instead of confessing it? What are you afraid of if you confess?**

- **Sin promises us life and satisfaction that we often think we can't get from God.** David wanted Bathsheba to satisfy him, and broke at least [four commandments](#) (murder, adultery, lying, and coveting) to have her. **What is something you are tempted to believe will make you happy (satisfy you) more than God?**
- David kills Uriah and takes Bathsheba as his wife – but the story isn't over. God pursues David in his sin by sending Nathan to confront him – God doesn't let him stay in his sin. **Does it comfort you to know that God cares about you – is working in your life – even as you struggle with sin? Why or why not?**
- David cries out to God in Psalm 51, which we know is written in response to his sin with Bathsheba and Uriah. He knows he can't cover up his sin anymore, he can't blame others, he can't try and make up for it with good works - **he can only trust that God is merciful.**
- We don't have to fix our messy situations ourselves (*we can't!*). God wants us to come to Him with our broken and contrite (*feeling remorse or guilt*) hearts, and promises joy and freedom from our sin because Jesus bore those sins on the cross. **How does it feel to know you can always turn to Jesus in your sin?**

PRACTICE

This coming week...

- Notice a way you cover up your sin (*they won't find out*) or blame-shift (*it's actually their fault...*). Why do you do it? **Confess your sin to the Lord, and thank Him for His loving, merciful pursuit of sinners.** Try confessing your sin to those you have offended.

PRAYER

Tim Keller, *The Songs of Jesus*

Lord, when I sin against others – and even against myself – I am ultimately sinning against You because we are all Your possessions whom You love. When I sin I don't just break Your laws but trample on Your heart. Help me to grasp that, because it helps me not just admit my sins but forsake them. Amen.

SING: THE LORD OUR GOD IS GOOD

C G C F C G F C

The Lord our God is good. The Lord our God is good, full of kind - ness and com - pas - sion,

6 E7 Am C/G F G C F G Am C/E F G C

mer - ci - ful and just; the Lord our God is good. 1. Who else knows our deep - est pain,
2. Who takes His in - her - i - tance and

11 Dm7 C F F G Am C/E F G C Dm7 C/E

bears it as His own? Find us in our na - ked shame, clothes and brings us
gives it all a - way? Wel - comes guests to feast with Him who nev - er can re -

16 F C G C F C G Tag

home? The Lord our God is good. The Lord our God is good, full of
-pay?

21 F C E7 Am C/G F G C last time to Tag

kind - ness and com - pas - sion, mer - ci - ful_ and just; the Lord our God is good.

WEEK 6: NOW I SEE

MARCH 24th / SAUL (PAUL)

“And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight.” Acts 9:18

READ: ACTS 9:1-18a

¹But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ²and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. ⁴And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” ⁵And he said, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.” ⁷The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. ⁸Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank. ¹⁰Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” ¹¹And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, ¹²and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” ¹³But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. ¹⁴And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.” ¹⁵But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. ¹⁶For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” ¹⁷So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized.”

REFLECT

“Thine eye diffused a quickening ray, I woke, the dungeon flamed with light. My chains fell off, my heart was free! I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.” –Charles Wesley

- Have you ever been in a place where it was so dark you couldn't see? What did you feel?
- In [Acts 8:1-8](#), Saul stands by approvingly as the disciple Stephen is stoned to death for preaching Jesus. Saul begins to persecute all who proclaim Jesus, believing them to be liars and heretics, violently dragging them out of their homes to prison and possible death. Despite hearing Stephen's testimony of Jesus, it took a personal encounter with Jesus and His power (*a blinding light!*) to change Saul's heart. **What has Jesus used in your life to convince you He is your Savior?**
- Saul was blind to his sin and need of grace. When Jesus gave him back his sight, he received both physical and spiritual sight (*truly seeing His Savior!*) **As we keep turning in repentance to Jesus, we are asking Him to take away our blind spots** (*ways we can't see our sin, ways we love ourselves more than others, etc.*) **Is there an area of your life you need Jesus to help you see more clearly?** (*hint: we all have blind spots!*)
- When Jesus died for our sins and rose again, **He saved us from something** (death & eternal separation from God) **and He also saved us for something** (eternal life with Him and freedom to love one another as Christ loves). Saul is no longer blind or trapped because of sin, and it is because of the powerful grace of God that he has been changed and preaches the good news. **Can you think of a time you felt free to love someone else because of Jesus' grace for you?**

PRACTICE

This coming week...

- Notice a way **Jesus is helping you see more clearly** (*convicting you of sin, reminding you of His love, helping you to love a difficult person*). Share with a friend or family member and give thanks together for the good work He is doing in your heart.

PRAYER

God of compassion, in Jesus Christ You did not disdain the company of sinners but welcomed them with love. Look upon us in mercy, we pray. Our sins are more than we can bear; our pasts enslave us; our misdeeds are beyond correcting. Forgive the wrongs we cannot undo; free us from a past we cannot change; heal what we can no longer fix. Grace our lives with Your love and turn the tears of our past into the joys of new life with you. Amen.

SING: AMAZING GRACE

1. A - maz - ing grace— how sweet the sound—
2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
3. Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares
4. When we've been there ten thou - sand years,
that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost
and grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did
I have al - read - y come; 'tis grace hath brought
bright shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days
but now am found, was blind but now I see.
that grace ap - pear the hour - I first be - lieved!
me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
to sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

John Newton (1779); Tune: NEW BRITAIN, Virginia Harmony (1831). Public domain.
Listen to our [WEPC Lent Playlist](#) to sing along.

LENT & EASTER 2024

West End Presbyterian Church

www.wepc.org

PERSONAL RETREAT

March 9 8:30am - 12:30pm

EYES for the KINGDOM

March 16 Carl & Karen Ellis

LENTEN HYMN SING

March 24 9:00am

MAUNDY THURSDAY

March 28 7:00pm

GOOD FRIDAY

March 29 7:00pm

EASTER SUNDAY

March 31

9:00 & 10:30am

