

Lent

REPENT | FAST | PREPARE

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE



Preparing Our Hearts for Easter

What is Lent? Christians around the world celebrate this season of fasting and prayer for 40 days leading up to Easter. During this time, we symbolically follow Christ, who set aside 40 days in the desert to prepare for his public ministry (Matthew 4:1-11). It is a time in which we anticipate Christ's victory on the cross over the darkness of sin and death. Together, we fast from lesser things to be filled with the greater things of the good news of the gospel.

God desires to deal graciously with us, to forgive according to His own promise, and so to grant us a joyful and cheerful conscience so we can come to Him in prayer and repentance. To repent is to re-orient our heart, mind and soul away from self and towards God. It's the acknowledgement that life lived apart from God is the way of sin and death. And as we repent, we discover that God is the One who has always loved us and who always first moves towards us and who is already doing everything in His power to lead us into His way of life, which He opened to us through Jesus Christ.

Just as we carefully prepare for big events in our personal lives, such as a wedding or graduation, Lent invites us to make our hearts ready for remembering Jesus' death and resurrection. These three weeks of prayer and reflection will joyfully give way to a corporate celebration of His resurrection as we gather for Easter Service on Sunday, March 31, at 10 am. It is our prayer that as you journey with us, you would be reminded of the reality of our need for God's gracious love and forgiveness, and that you will personally experience the reality of God's redeeming grace.

WEEK 1: MARCH 10-16

Pray for the Person(s) You Will Invite to Attend the Easter Service

Anyone who loves God with the total commitment and loves others with the selfless attitude that Jesus quotes in the Greatest Commandment (Mark 12:28-31), will not violate specific commands against sins such as envy, greed, and violence. Jesus as Jesus demonstrated His perfect love for God and us by sacrificing His life on the cross, we are called to live out these greatest commandments by giving our lives to God and to each other. By identifying ourselves as followers of Jesus Christ, we have recognized that Jesus teaches with the highest authority possible – divine authority. And because we recognize His authority, we want to consistently apply his example and teachings of love, mercy, and forgiveness to every aspect of our daily lives.

No person or possession or thing can take the place of God as the primary focus of our lives. We can no allow anything to distort the values by which we make decisions or judgments. Jesus makes it clear that God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is whose judgment and will ultimately matter in the world, and in each of our lives. Many of those who heard and saw Jesus admired and respected him, but his mission was to fix their attention, and our attention, on the Creator God, receive His salvation, and then mold their lives according to His will alone. Just as He did with the man who had been paralyzed (John 5) and the woman who had been accused of adultery (John 8), Jesus directs us to take responsibility for the choices we make in life. He wants us to humbly accept the opportunities that God offers us, to put our sins behind us and begin life anew.

Sunday, March 10

The Necessity of Humility | *Luke 18:9-14*

And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and viewed others with contempt: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Monday, March 11

He Hears Us | *Matthew 7:7-11*

Jesus: “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!”

Tuesday, March 12

The Greatest Commands | *Mark 12:28-31*

One of the scribes ... asked Him, “What commandment is the foremost of all?” Jesus answered, “The foremost is, ‘Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Wednesday, March 13

God Rejoices Over You | *Luke 15:1-7*

Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. Both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.” So He told them this parable, saying, “What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”

Thursday, March 14

Begin Anew | *John 5:14b, John 8:10b-11*

Jesus to the man who had been paralyzed: “Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you.”

Jesus to the woman accused of adultery: “Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?” She said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said, ‘I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more.’”

Friday, March 15

Begin Anew | *John 5:14b, John 8:10b-11*

Jesus: “He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”

Saturday, March 16

The Highest Authority | *John 5:36, 39*

Jesus: “But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me.... You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me.”

WEEK 2: MARCH 17-23

Invite the Person(s) You Have Been Praying for to Easter Service

In Jeremiah 9:24, the LORD God says, "... let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things." Yet, since God is invisible and imperceptible to our natural senses, we can only know Him if He chooses to reveal Himself to us, which He has done through His Word, in the beauty and complexities of nature, through our own conscience, and by showing us His love through the actions of other people. In the presence of His great revelation, why do we not fall on our faces in awe of Him like Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the Apostle John did when they beheld His glory?

Jesus said, "Ask and it will be given." If we want to become more like Christ, we must first know Him - both intellectually and experientially. Therefore, we must cry out to Him to continuously reveal Himself to us at a deeper and deeper levels. As we come to know Him more deeply, we will then be able to turn our hatred into love, forgive others, and show mercy to those who oppose or offend us—just as Jesus did with us. It is when we forgive those who are most difficult to forgive that we begin to appreciate the awesomeness of the love of Christ as well as the depth of His forgiveness for us. It is then that we will want to obey His commands out of love for Him, rather than out of obligation. And it is through our forgiveness of others that they will also experience the love of Christ and know His forgiveness as well.

Sunday, March 17

Knowing Jesus, Knowing God | *John 7:28- 29*

Then Jesus cried out in the temple, teaching and saying, "You both know Me and know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. I know Him, because I am from Him, and He sent Me."

Monday, March 18

Listen to Him | *John 7:40- 41a*

Some of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, "This certainly is the Prophet." Others were saying, "This is the Christ."

Tuesday, March 19

Turning Hatred to Love | *John 8:7a,9a*

But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her"....When they heard it, they began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the center of the court.

Wednesday, March 20

Pick Your Side | *John 8:18, 26*

Jesus: "I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me.... He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world."

Thursday, March 21

Sent by the Father | *John 8:28-30*

So Jesus said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him.

Friday, March 22

Receive His Joy | *John 8:31-32*

So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

Saturday, March 23

Keeping His Word | *John 8:51*

Jesus: "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death."

WEEK 3: MARCH 24-31

Holy Week – Palm Sunday to Easter Remind the Person(s) You Have Invited and Make Plans to Meet Each Other For Easter Service

How often do we become so focused on wanting the Lord to deliver us from our undesirable circumstances, rather than praising Him for walking with us in our circumstances? During this week as we draw near to the celebrations of Good Friday and Easter, let us meditate on the suffering that Christ went through for us—physically, emotionally, and spiritually, so that we might enter into His glorious kingdom forever.

Let this be our source of joy and gladness. Christ has won the victory! In the words that Paul spoke from prison, “Rejoice! Again, I say, ‘rejoice!’” Let us look forward to the day when there will finally be no more suffering, no pain, no more sorrow, no more death, and no more curse! And, until that day comes, let us find comfort in the arms of the One who walks with us during all our trials of this age—the One who has promised never to leave us or forsake us—and the one who reminds us to take heart, because He has overcome the world!

How often do we become so focused on wanting the Lord to deliver us from our undesirable circumstances, rather than praising Him for walking with us in our circumstances? During this week as we draw near to the celebrations of Good Friday and Easter, let us meditate on the suffering that Christ went through for us—physically, emotionally, and spiritually, so that we might enter His glorious kingdom forever.

Let this be our source of joy and gladness. Christ has won the victory! In the words that Paul spoke from prison, “Rejoice! Again, I say, ‘rejoice!’” Let’s look forward to the day when there will finally be no more suffering, no pain, no more sorrow, no more death, and no more curse! And, until that day comes, let us find comfort in the arms of the One who walks with us in the midst of all our trials of this age - the One who has promised never to leave us or forsake us—and the one who reminds us to take heart, because He has overcome the world!

Palm Sunday, Sunday, March 24

Signs Confirm His Deity | *John 10:37-38*

“If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.”

Monday, March 25

A Higher Calling | *John 13:34-35*

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Tuesday, March 26

The Son Glorified | *John 13:31b*

Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him.”

Wednesday, March 27

The King Brings Truth | *John 18:37*

“Pilate said to Him, “So You are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”

Thursday, March 28

Follow His Example | *John 13:12-15*

“So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.”

Good Friday, March 29

He Bore our Sins | *Psalms 22:1,7 (ESV)*

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?”

All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads.”

Saturday, March 30

Christ has won the Victory | *Psalms 98:1a,4,8*

Oh sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things! His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!

Let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills sing for joy together

EASTER SUNDAY, March 31

He is Risen! | *Luke 24:5b-7, Luke 24:45-48, Colossians 3:1-4*

“The men said to them, ‘Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.’”

“Then [Jesus] opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.’”

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have

died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.



Victory
Church

410 E. Yorktown Road, Yorktown, VA 23693

victory.nu