

40 DAYS OF PRAYER
LENT DEVOTIONAL

Week #7: March 25-30

Lent Devotional Day 35 | Monday, March 25

Today's Devotional comes from Anthonia Benson

Scripture: John 17:25 (NASB) - "O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You have sent Me;

Jesus makes Himself known! Imagine a courtroom and Jesus is the defense attorney, humankind is the accused and God is the Judge. Jesus pleads our case to the heavenly Father on how we can access eternal life and experience His joy.

Throughout this verse, Jesus reveals in his prayer to the heavenly Father His oneness with God. He understands our shortcomings, and He is our Advocate. He begins the verse, "O righteous Father..." What does it mean for God to be righteous? It is His faithfulness in His covenant to us. God sent Jesus to deliver His Word and our acceptance of Christ provides a pathway to salvation. "...For it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16 NASB). Although we are in the world, we are not of the world through His saving grace for the propitiation of our sins.

What does it mean for us to know Jesus and know He was sent by God? In other words, how does Jesus make Himself known to us?

I grew up Methodist in Nigeria and attended church regularly. I was baptized as a young girl but never really knew what that meant and did not have any guidance on how to apply it. Ultimately, I came to the United States to further my studies. After graduation, I stayed, worked and bought a home, but I was alone with no family. My daily routine was the gym in the morning, work, back to the gym, go to my part-time job, and then back home. I was single and kept myself occupied so as not to have any downtime. I was restless at home cleaning obsessively. I was lonely and in a dark place. I struggled with thoughts of ending it all. Even with that, I thought I had it all. I had a home and a great job. However, I was depressed. A psychiatrist prescribed meds that only depressed me more. I was empty until a friend invited me to a nearby church. I was moved by the sermon from Matthew 11:28 (NASB) "Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden." I dedicated my life to Christ. Jesus found me and made Himself known. I began to see things through a different lens and purpose. I studied the Bible to understand the Word and know more about Jesus while applying His teachings to my life. Jesus wanted a relationship with me first and I realized I had to put Him first. Now I was no longer alone. He changed my life. He loved me unconditionally. He removed my loneliness, He introduced me to my husband of 15 years, and He blessed us with three children. God was working behind the scenes and Jesus made Himself known to me by my struggles.

When Jesus makes Himself known to you, are you ready to accept Him? **The only way we can live a life of truth, meaning and abundance of joy with purpose is by personally knowing Jesus Christ.**

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Father, thank you for this new morning and the privilege of beginning the day with you. As the day unfolds, give us wisdom to handle any situation we encounter. Let our speech be seasoned with grace and our thoughts pleasing to you. We are grateful to know that regardless of where this day takes us, you will be right there with us. There is no shortage of good things in your presence. Let us live with our mind set on things above so that your light will shine in our lives and your name will be glorified, Amen!

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Lent Devotional Day 36 | Tuesday, March 26

Today's Devotional comes from Steven Anderson Jr., one of our high school students

Scripture: John 17:25 - "O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me."

By this time in your life, you probably have taken a look around and realized how much of the world doesn't know Christ as their savior. Even many Christians struggle to understand what it means to truly know God. Knowing God means walking in step with what He tells you to do. This knowing, in turn, leads to the second part of the verse which shows that truly knowing God will set you apart. Since we are set apart, we need to remember who we represent. Do the people in your life know you are a Christian based on how you act? Or do you say you know Christ but aren't willing to set your desires apart from the world? As you go today, let your life be a testimony to Christ. Christ has set you apart, so shine His light in this dark world.

Prayer: Dear Lord, I pray that I will live as a person set apart from this world. I pray that my life will be a testimony to the non-believers around me. Give me wisdom as I go through today and help me to be bold in my faith. Amen

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Lent Devotional Day 37 | Wednesday, March 27

Today's Devotional comes from Chaplain Steve Anderson

Scripture: John 17:26 - I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.

Are your relationships enduring, loving, and unifying? My wife, Rochelle, has four girlfriends from school who have stayed in close contact for almost five decades. So close that they go away on vacation each year and communicate regularly.

My Savior has been united in love with His Father and the Spirit for all of eternity. Fortunately, this is not a competition. No one's relationships would measure up to our Triune God's. He is our example of how we are to love one another. He is much more than an example though; in that He designed us and empowers us through His Spirit to live like Him. Through the Spirit, Jesus was making His Father known to the disciples. The more He did so, the more the love of the Father would be in His followers. The more we see the real Jesus and surrender our lives to Him, the more the love of God dwells in us. We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19).

Jesus' life (His perfect love and obedience), His death (His atoning sacrifice), and His resurrection, fully accomplished what we never could. Since this is a Christian's reality, may we continue to gaze upon His beauty and be filled with Christ's love. In turn, so magnify Jesus in word and deed that others would be filled with His love as well.

Now to Him, who is able to present us in joy before God's glorious presence without fault, draw us into greater worship of Him and love for others (Jude 24).

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Lent Devotional Day 38 | Thursday, March 28

Today's Devotional comes from Pastor Nate Keeler

Scripture: [John 18:1-11](#)

Theme: The Distance Between "Saying" and "Doing"

We know that "saying" and "doing" are not always the same thing. We have a word for people who say one thing but do another: hypocrite. We have an allergy to hypocrisy when we see it, especially in our leaders. The irony is that we see it clearly in people we may not even know personally, and yet often struggle to see it in ourselves, whom we ought to know intimately. For example, did you break your fast, break a promise, or give into temptation during Lent? Have you made a judgment on someone else for something they did, yet you have done it yourself?

Jesus is the only person who never once could be accused of hypocrisy. Jesus' "saying" and "doing" were completely aligned. We've spent the season of Lent reading slowly through the many words of Jesus in his farewell prayer. As beautiful and profound as this prayer is, what if Jesus said "Amen," walked to the Garden of Gethsemane, and decided not to lay down his life as a sacrifice for mankind? What if, when the lynch mob came for Jesus, he struck them all down and disappeared into the night?

But of course, this isn't what Jesus did. Every word Jesus prayed he intended to do. The mission God called Him to ([John 17:4](#)), He surrendered to ([John 18:11](#)). All the sheep He said He would protect ([John 17:12](#)), He kept safe (John 18:9). All those Jesus said that He loved ([John 17:25-26](#)), He proved that He loved in his journey to the cross ([John 18:8,11](#)).

As we come to these final hours walking with Jesus to the cross during Lent, reflect on the absolute integrity of Jesus in his "saying" and "doing." Consider that we can trust that Jesus has fulfilled and will fulfill every word of His prayer for us to the Father. Do you trust him?

Prayer Prompt: Consider the distance between your "saying" and "doing." Confess your weakness and failure to close that distance at times in your life. Thank Jesus for his absolute integrity in word and deed. Tell Him that you trust Him to fulfill every word of His promise-filled prayer in [John 17](#).

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Lent Devotional Day 39 | Friday, March 29

Today's Devotional comes from Pastor Bo Matthews

Scripture: [John 19:25-37](#) - The Death of Christ

In John 17:21, Jesus prayed “for those who will believe in me that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us.” That unusual language expresses an intimate communion of the Father and the Son with each other, and of the Church with the Father and the Son. How might our congregation experience that communion?

Today is Good Friday. We call it good, because the New Testament never calls Jesus' suffering and death a tragedy or travesty of justice, but a demonstration of love. The New Testament also calls the Church to imitate God's suffering love. “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us” (Ephesians 5:1-2). This way of love is the way of self-denial. The congregation learns to thwart their natural wishes and tastes for the sake of each other's good.

This means looking out not only for our own interests but also for the interests of others during the contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, and dissensions that threaten the peace of the Church in the 2024 presidential election cycle. How easy it will be in the next seven months to respond to the heated words of others with unguarded words of our own. How satisfying it will be to impose our political wisdom on each other. Not everyone will like that. There could be name calling. There could be hard feelings.

Let us deny ourselves heated and unguarded words. Let us deny ourselves the satisfaction of imposing our political wisdom on each other. Let us build bridges where we find division among people. Let us refuse to speak evil of people who irritate us and forgive people who offend us. Such moments of self-denial are Good Friday moments. Those moments maintain the unity of the Church in a bond of peace. They make visible the communion of the Church with the Father and the Son.

All this deserves more love than I have to give:
but, Lord, do Thou turn me all into love,
and all my love into obedience,
and let my obedience be without interruption,
and then I hope
Thou wilt accept such a return as I can make. Amen.

Join us this evening at 7pm

Good Friday / Tenebrae Service

Our Good Friday Tenebrae Service is a vesper service of quiet reflection of Jesus' journey to the cross. It is a candlelight service of spoken word, scripture and music. Once you've experienced this time of remembrance, Easter Sunday is even more glorious!

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Lent Devotional Day 40 | Saturday, March 30

Today's Devotional comes from Pastor Terry Foester

Scripture: John 17: 1 and 26 - After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: *"Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you....I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."*

Tomorrow is Easter! Yesterday was Good Friday. Today is Silent Saturday - the day Jesus was dead. I feel strangely uncomfortable, even typing the words... "Jesus was dead." I want to edit the sentence.

Yesterday...on Good Friday, we took a somber posture at the foot of the cross. It's a place of humility, a place to marvel and grieve our Lord's suffering. It's a place of heart-break, but an hour Jesus said would come.

Tomorrow...on Easter, we find the empty tomb! It's a day to sing and say "He Is Risen! He Is Risen Indeed!"

Today, in the silence of the day...we find uncertainty.

We live in the rhythm of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. As we wrestle to remain present on any given day, the "unfinished" of yesterday and the "to-do" of tomorrow are pushing and pulling us around like a couple of schoolyard bullies. And in the busy weeks, we lose track of yesterday and tomorrow, struggling to get through the demands of today.

What is happening in your life that makes it difficult to pause and be present on this Silent Saturday? I invite you to pause, and consider that which tugs at your spirit. What is occupying your thoughts? Go ahead, and pause now for a moment.

The silence of Saturday offers an invitation to step into the momentary grief of the day. Now that you're fully present, I invite you to step into that moment, and attempt to identify with the grief of the followers of Jesus. Even though Jesus foretold this day on multiple occasions, imagine the seared image of their Lord on the cross. As one of his beloved, put yourself in the room with the other followers, gathering for a time of collective tears, discussion and prayer. Ponder the pain of separation they experienced that day.

How vulnerable He became on that cross. I picture His lifeless body in the tomb. I try to envision Joseph taking down the body, wrapping it in linen, and placing it in a tomb cut out of rock ([Mark 15:43-46](#)).

Thankfully, this grief is momentary. On this 40 day, we come to the end of our Lenten journey of "Walking in His Words," centered on Jesus' Farewell Prayer in [John 17](#).

As we read the book-ends of Jesus' Farewell prayer in verses 1 and 26, we pause at the hour of Jesus' death, right here on Silent Saturday, and we find the beautiful reminder that Jesus

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will continue to make the Father known to us, that Jesus himself will be in us! That He is ALIVE in US!

This prayer, unfolding in the upper room during passion week, reveals Jesus' heart, the purpose behind His sacrificial work on the cross, and His aspirations for the earthly church.

I hope there are some lasting takeaways that you've developed during this time, such as spirit-led attitudes, new spiritual rhythms, new margin for time with God, or a greater perspective on what's important. Will those aspects continue for you?

Forty days is just long enough to begin seeing small changes over time, and lasting change takes time. As you step out of this season, take time to journal around the following questions:

- What did you find most difficult about the last 40 days?
- What is a lesson you learned? Why did God want you to learn that lesson? What good might come from it?
- What is something you need to continue? (Possibly a new attitude, a new truth to live by, a new way to rely on the Holy Spirit or a new spiritual rhythm)
- What did you learn about yourself, others, or God?
- How might this new insight influence our church or those in your sphere of influence?

Prayer: Jesus, thank you for Your resurrection, and for victory over sin and death. Help me move forward, not in my own strength, but in the strength of your Holy Spirit working in and through me. Lord Jesus, thank you for being alive in me. Help me make you known to those around me. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Join us tomorrow on Easter Sunday for the Resurrection Celebration

We will celebrate Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday with three services: 8:00am Traditional, 9:30am Contemporary (also online) and 11:00am Contemporary.