

# LIVING

Creative  
Communications  
Sample

## THE GOSPEL LIFE

daily devotions for christians on a mission

■ The Season Of Lent ■



Ash Wednesday

## The Great Exchange

*But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.*

*Isaiah 53:5*

*Challenge:  
Exchange fault-finding for mercy.  
Exchange distraction for careful listening.  
Exchange malice for love.*

Remember your teacher's red pencil? Did a big red X next to a math problem or spelling word elate you? Or deflate you? As kids, that red X seemed indelible. It was a symbol that said, "you failed." And our hearts sank.

But tip an X to the right or to the left, and that symbol becomes a cross! Although an instrument of death, the cross now becomes a symbol of rescue and triumph, of love and life. The Victim becomes the Victor. Jesus lives. Evil is overcome by good. Sin and Satan are defeated. Death turns to life. The guilty are pronounced righteous and promised eternal life.

What a great exchange!

*Jesus, you took my sins to the cross and exchanged them for your righteousness. Thanks and praise to you, dear Lord. Whenever I look at the cross, I will rejoice.*

*—Donna J. Streufert  
South Bend, IN*

*Read:  
Isaiah 53:3-12*

## Thursday After Ash Wednesday A Worker “Be”

*For we are  
God’s work-  
manship, cre-  
ated in Christ  
Jesus to do  
good works...  
Ephesians 2:10*

*Challenge:  
Pick up your  
neighbor’s  
paper, call your  
mother, give  
your spouse  
the evening off.  
Do something  
nice for some-  
one every day  
during Lent.*

*Read:  
2 Thess. 3:6-14  
1 Timothy 6:18-19*

The short, dark days of Lent can seem like drudgery. We’re in a time of introspection, prayer and fasting. It’s hard to get excited about doing good works. But now’s the time for good deeds, Paul writes in Ephesians. As Christians here on earth, we embody Jesus and God’s love for his people. (That’s hard to think about in the dark and cold when your stomach is growling.) But good works can get us through hard times. With each good deed, you’re fulfilling your purpose for being here.

Good works, in conjunction with a good heart, brings us joy—an unexpected, added benefit. Is there any better way to get through Lent?

*Let me reflect your workmanship  
by being your work man—or woman!  
Amen!*

—K.S. Wuertz  
Leslie, MO

## *Friday after Ash Wednesday*

# Checking In

*Let your requests be made known to God.*  
*Philippians 4:6*

*Challenge:*  
*The next time you have the desire to check your phone, say a prayer instead.*

*Read:*  
*Ephesians 6:16-20*

Now that almost everyone has some sort of smartphone, I am noticing an interesting habit that we have almost universally fallen into. Every time we have a spare moment, we have this seemingly unstoppable urge to check our phone to see if there's a new text, e-mail or Facebook post.

If only we had the same urge when it came to our desire to check in with God through prayer, Bible study or worship. Again and again in Scripture, especially during Lent, we see how valuable it was for Jesus to check in with his Father. The truth is that the Holy Spirit is constantly nudging us to get closer to God. We only need to stay linked in to the Spirit and make connecting with God a spiritual reflex.

*Dear Jesus, instill in me the innate desire to regularly do those things that keep me connected to the Father.*

—Mark Zimmermann  
St. Louis, MO

## *Saturday after Ash Wednesday*

# Send the Very Best!

*How great is  
the love our  
father has  
lavished on us,  
that we should  
be called chil-  
dren of God.  
And that is  
what we are!*

*1 John 3:1*

*Challenge:  
Give out some  
Valentine's  
Day cards this  
year to people  
who need to  
hear and see  
God's love in  
Christ, and tell  
them!*

*Read:*

*John 3:16  
Philippians 1:9*

Matthew was all excited about bringing Valentine's Day cards to each of his classmates. He wanted to make sure he did not miss anyone. As he left for school that morning, he once again checked his list over, just to assure himself no one was left out. When Matthew returned home from school, he looked at his Mom and simply said, "No, not one." His Mom, thinking that he was referring to how many Valentine's Day cards he himself had received, started to comfort Matt with words of support. "No, that's okay Mom, I didn't get any cards, but the main thing is that I didn't forget anyone."

The Lord has not forgotten anyone either as he reaches out to give us much more than a Valentine's Day card! He gives us his life so that we, too, may live!

*Lord, thanks for the gift of love, not from a greeting card, but from your death and resurrection.*

—Rich Bimler  
Bloomingdale, IL

*Easter Sunday*

# Your Name Has Been Called

*Jesus said to her, "Mary."  
John 20:16*

*Challenge:  
Spend the  
Easter  
season in  
gratitude.  
Give thanks  
for the times  
Jesus has  
called your  
name. Tell  
someone  
about your  
Christian life  
every day.*

*Read:  
Isaiah 43:1,10  
Ephesians 1:18*

Whenever I read this passage I get shivers. The disciples have left the empty tomb. Mary remains. She is begging a stranger for Jesus' body. Then, he calls her by name and she recognizes Jesus. In that moment, she goes from despair to elation! We often see the world through "Good Friday Eyes." Of course the crucified Jesus should be in the tomb, no matter what he's told us. If he's not there, someone must have taken his body, no matter what he's promised. But then, he speaks our name and the truth becomes ours again. Easter and the risen Christ bring heaven to earth. Listen up! And shout Alleluia!

*Silently I listen for you to call my name. Alleluia!*

—K.S. Wuertz  
Leslie, MO

