

LIVING LENT

As People of the Resurrection

RICH BIMLER

INTRODUCTION

You are encouraged to view these devotions in the same way you would if you began a novel by reading the last chapter first. That is exactly how we live our lives of faith as people of the resurrection. We already know how it all turns out: Jesus Christ has died and risen for us. Embrace “living Lent” as we retrace Christ’s steps to the cross and on to the empty tomb, watching for the signposts of PONDER, PURPOSE, PEOPLE, PROCLAIM, PRAISE, PAIN and PROMISE along the way.

—*DR. RICH BIMLER, AUTHOR*

PONDER

I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds.

PSALM 77:12

TREASURE UP

Ash Wednesday

Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

LUKE 2:19

We begin our living Lent journey by remembering Mary's words at Jesus' birth. What a great ministry model Mary gives to us to follow—to ponder anew what the Lord has done and continues to do for us! Lent is the time to reflect on God's love and acceptance of each of us. Like Mary, how can we "treasure up" all of the blessings and experiences of faith in which the Lord continues to immerse us? Pondering is the beginning of living out an active faith. Give it a try as we surround ourselves with worship, prayer and sharing this Lenten season.

Jesus, I will ponder now, on your holy passion. Amen.

LIVING LENT TODAY: Share with others what you are pondering today. Name some of your mistakes and disappointments. Then let the Lord turn your heart and mind from those failures into accepting the forgiveness that is yours in Jesus, the same Jesus whom Mary pondered in her heart.

GREAT WORKS

Thursday After Ash Wednesday

Great are the works of the LORD; they are pondered by all who delight in them.

PSALM 111:2

Five-year-old Abbey was drawing a picture. Her mom asked, "What are you drawing?" and she responded, "A picture of Jesus." Her mom explained that no one really knows what Jesus looked like. Abbey simply said, "They do now!"

Oh, for the faith of a child who delights in the Lord. We are also enabled by the Spirit to ponder in exciting ways what the Lord has done and continues to do in and through us. Lent is the perfect time to practice pondering. Instead of merely accepting all the gifts from God

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this day, stop and intentionally ponder them. If people wonder what you are doing, confess that you are practicing the art of pondering. And then observe how others start pondering you.

Lord, thanks for your marvelous gifts you give because you love us. Keep us proclaiming your love as we ponder out loud to others. Amen.

LIVING LENT TODAY: Name 2-3 “great works” that the Lord is doing through you today, and delight in them by telling others and by giving thanks.

RE-MEMBERING US

Friday After Ash Wednesday

He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

LUKE 22:19

This Scripture is from the passion narrative often read on Sunday mornings during worship. In a real sense, the Lord’s Supper is another way of pondering what the Almighty can do and is doing in our lives right now. This sacrament assures us again and again that we are redeemed and renewed for living a grace-filled life in this often graceless world. Lent is not the time to remind the Lord that we are trying harder in our faith life, but rather the time to realize that regardless of how hard we try, we are never going to redeem ourselves. Yes, it is true what the Lord has done for us and continues to do for us. His dying and rising makes us his Easter people. Now that is really something to ponder and to tell others about, too!

Jesus, thanks for re-mem-bering us in your Supper. Thanks for allowing us to live on “this side” of the resurrection. Amen.

LIVING LENT TODAY: Read Luke 22:7-23 and ponder away.

LISTEN AND LEARN

Saturday After Ash Wednesday

Hear, O God, as I voice my complaint ... All people will fear: they will proclaim the works of God and ponder what he has done.

PSALM 64:1, 9

Now here is a psalm I can really relate to. The writer is complaining. Things aren’t going well. He is tired of all the noise and wars and

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problems in him and around him. It sounds like he has just watched the 10 p.m. news.

So what does he do about it? He talks to the Lord. He listens to the Lord. In a sense, the psalmist is living Lent just like we are, as he is wooed back by God's love to see his Lord continually bringing grace and hope to the world, and especially to him. And so we can shout like the psalmist: "Proclaim and ponder and rejoice in the Lord, and take refuge in him." What powerful words to enable us to continue our Lenten walk.

Jesus, thanks for listening to our complaints. Now help us listen to you, as you bring peace and hope to us. Amen.

LIVING LENT TODAY: Be like the psalmist and write your own psalm. Say what you want to say, and then also reflect, rejoice and be refreshed in his love.

PURPOSE

The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever.

PSALM 138:8

CONNECTION

First Sunday in Lent

On reaching the place, he said to his disciples, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation ... Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me."

LUKE 22:40-42

The place is the Mount of Olives. Jesus goes to pray with his disciples, who still do not understand what is going on. (Some call them the "duh-sciples"!)

His purpose is to keep connected to his Father through prayer, and to keep his disciples connected as well. But they do not understand. Later on, the Lord finds them sleeping instead of praying. Someone recently quipped that in today's culture, Jesus would have said, "Why are you texting and not praying?"

A purpose of living Lent is to keep connected to the Lord. He is not the one who has disconnected from us. Prayer, worship, meditation and reflection are all ways to keep connected as people of the resurrection.

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Jesus, forgive me for sleepwalking so often. Wake me up to your presence and purpose. Amen.

LIVING LENT TODAY: Write out your purpose for living Lent in the coming weeks. Ask others to assist you.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Monday, the First Week of Lent

My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love so that they may have the full riches ... in order to know the mysteries of God.

COLOSSIANS 2:2

St. Paul knew how to live Lent as a person of the resurrection. Wouldn't it have been great to follow St. Paul around to be encouraged and supported? What a life that would have been!

But wait: Look around you right now. You and I do have St. Paul-type people who are willing and able to share with us the mysteries of God's love and forgiveness. Also, the purpose of Scripture is to encourage us to cling to the promise of God in Christ. And to top it all off, the Lord empowers you and me to be those encouragers to people who today need words and actions of affirmation and forgiveness, given by us to them, in the name of Jesus.

Today is a day to live purposefully for others, in the name of him who brings to us the purpose for living.

Lord Jesus, be our purpose in life and allow us to live purposefully for others. Amen.

LIVING LENT TODAY: Think of people around you who have encouraged you throughout the years. Thank God for them.

CHANGING FOCUS

Tuesday, the First Week of Lent

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven.

ECCLESIASTES 3:1

Take time in your "living Lent" day to read all of Ecclesiastes 3. Try reading it first as someone who does not know that Christ has died and risen for you and me. Note especially v. 19: "Everything is meaningless." Then read it again, as a person of the resurrection. What a difference a day makes, especially if that day is Easter!

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The purpose of these days of living Lent is intended to engage us in changing our focus from our sinful selves and what we cannot do or do not do or should not do to clinging to the promise of the forgiveness and unconditional love of a resurrected Lord who has done it all for us. Like the Scripture above, we can now see all of life through the lens of the cross—and the empty tomb. That is the purpose of Lent. May it be so with you and all of us.

Lord Jesus, there is a time for everything. Help me to see you in everything every day and everywhere. Amen.

LIVING LENT TODAY: Ask people around you today what they think is the purpose of Lent. Share your thoughts together.

NEW VISION

Wednesday, the First Week of Lent

Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:5

Living on “this side” of the resurrection, as we do, allows us to live by faith and not by sight, as St. Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 5:7. We are enabled by the resurrected Lord to look at life through the cross and the resurrection. Even when we know and see the sins we continue to commit, even though we keep doing and thinking what we know we should not do and think, even when we feel alone, lost, lonely and the last in the line of life, the Lord, through faith, reminds us of what he has done for us on the cross. He says to us daily, “Come and see, through faith, that you are mine—forever!” Now that is what is called purposeful living.

Lord, even though it seems like we are often stuck on our “Good Fridays,” help us to move on to Easter, through the gift of faith. Amen.

LIVING LENT TODAY: Talk to someone today about why you believe in Jesus, and listen to their faith story as well.

REMINDERS

Thursday, the First Week of Lent

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

ROMANS 8:28

LIVING LENT

As People of the Resurrection

By *Rich Bimler*

These daily devotions by Rich Bimler remind us that Lent is a time to ponder and proclaim the fact that after every Good Friday in our lives, there is always an Easter, because Christ has risen. As people of the resurrection, we already know how it all turns out, so that makes “living Lent” a different experience for us as we retrace Christ’s steps to the cross during this holy season, fully aware that Easter has already come to pass.



Dr. Rich Bimler has served the Church in many capacities locally, nationally and throughout the world in

his over 50 years of ministry. He worked as President and CEO of Wheat Ridge Ministries for 15 years before retiring, and is now a consultant with Lutheran Life Communities as their Ambassador of Health, Hope and Aging. He and his wife Hazel have 3 grown children and seven grandchildren and live in Bloomingdale, Illinois.

This book, along with many other Creative Communications for the Parish products, is available on [amazonkindle](#) and [nook](#)