

HOPE-FULL LIVING

• *Daily Devotions for Living Life to the Fullest* •

Creative
Communications
Sample

✻ *The Season of Lent* ✻

Ash Wednesday

God's Eternal Gift

By grace you have been saved through faith.

Ephesians 2:8

Many Christians sacrifice something during Lent to represent and remember the sacrifice Jesus made for us. What sacrifice can you make in honor of Christ?

Dear heavenly Father, thank you for your gift of eternal life through your Son Jesus. Amen.

Reflect: What will you "give up" this Lent?

Read: Ephesians 2:8-9

*Betsy Becker Niedringhaus
Ballwin, MO*

Thursday after Ash Wednesday

Where Forgiveness Rules

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Matthew 6:12

Where forgiveness happens, there is Jesus, working reconciliation. Where people become reconciled, there is the Church. Thank you, my Savior.

Lord, help me to forgive others. Amen.

Reconcile: Visit or call or write someone with whom you need or want a closer relationship.

Read: Matthew 18:21-35

*Leo Symmank
Seabrook, TX*

Friday after Ash Wednesday

Time for Weeding

As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

Matthew 13:22

Much time, energy and expense are devoted to weeding flower and vegetable gardens or the lawn. The effort is not a one-time thing and requires periodic attention. The 40-day period of Lent encourages us sinners to look at the “weeds” we have in our life and remove the ones found that take our focus away from the one who died on the cross and three days later left the tomb, suffering death so we can have eternal life.

Why do we only devote 40 days to removing our “weeds”? Why don’t we devote 365 days of every year to repentance until we are called home?

God in heaven, help us always to recognize the weeds we have in our lives, weeds that keep us from focusing on you and what your Son did for us. Amen.

Reminder: The Holy Spirit is with you to help identify the weeds.

Read: Romans 12:2-3; Philippians 2:12-13

*Don Hollmann
Ballwin, MO*

Saturday after Ash Wednesday

In His Footsteps

Jesus said, "Follow me."

Matthew 4:19

One of my earliest childhood memories is walking with my dad to church. In the winter, during Lent, the sidewalks were covered with snow. I walked behind him stepping into his footprints. I was simply following him.

For years now I have been following Jesus, just as the disciples did. Why? Because he also said to me, "Follow me." After all, he is the way to lead me, the truth to strengthen me, the life that brings me eternal life (John 14:6). Lent is a good time to focus my eyes on Jesus and follow in his footsteps.

Won't you join me as we age together, looking forward to our last day on earth? Then we will enter into our Lord's very presence, because we follow Jesus.

Lord Jesus, lead me every day as I follow in your footsteps. Amen.

Meditate: During Lent, spend time pondering your Lenten journey walking in Jesus' footsteps. Sing the hymn, "Come, Follow Me, the Savior Spake," written by Johann Scheffler.

Read: Philippians 4:8-9, 13; 1 Peter 4:7-11

*Walter M. Schoedel
Webster Groves, MO*

Sunday, the First Week of Lent

Repentance

*From that time Jesus began to preach, saying,
“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*

Matthew 4:17

I hate asking for directions. I would rather travel twenty miles in the wrong direction than ask for help. Why? Because I don't want to admit that I am going the wrong way.

A lot of people think that the word *repent* is a negative word. It's negative only because we don't want to admit that we're wrong. We don't want to turn around, because we want to fight for our right to be right.

It is very uncomfortable to admit guilt. It's embarrassing. It stings, yet is the best thing for us. In order for us to know the real freedom of the forgiveness of Jesus, we must repent. We must turn away from our sin and toward our forgiving God whose arms are outstretched waiting to receive us.

Lord God, thank you for calling us to repentance and giving us the ability to do so. Amen.

Go: Make an appointment with your pastor to have a time of private confession and absolution.

Read: Acts 2:1-41

*Jeremy Klaustermeier
Warrenton, MO*

Monday, the First Week of Lent

Thunderstorm for the Soul

*Have mercy on me, O God ... my sin is ever before me ...
Restore to me the joy of your salvation.*

Psalm 51:1, 3, 12

Joseph McGurl's painting, "Thunderstorm Over the Midwest From a Plane Window," is a night view of expansive dark clouds looming over a plain of city lights, with a lightning strike brightening the sky and city. Darkness and light—these are spiritual elements of the painting—and Lent!

During Lent, thoughts of Christ's suffering and death shake us awake. Recalling our sins, we enter a dark place of shame and regret. It's time to "confess your sins to one another and pray for one another" (James 5:16). We pray. But do we confess? Do we cling to our sins, even those we confessed, and stay in darkness? Why? God offers his light of love, hope and peace. Accept God's forgiveness, forgive yourself and ask others for forgiveness. Move closer to God with the joy of salvation.

Jesus, help me see my sins, confess them and live joyfully. Amen.

Do: Let go of a past sin you have confessed.

Read: Psalm 51:1-13; 1 Timothy 1:15

*Catherine A. Welch
Southbury, CT*

Tuesday, the First Week of Lent

Two Thieves

And when they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.

Luke 23:33

Fulton Oursler observed, “Many of us crucify ourselves between two thieves—regret for the past, and fear of the future.” Both rob us of peace, joy and even life itself.

Love led Jesus to embrace a cross for our sakes. He wasn’t in any position to argue with the soldiers about the placement of his cross. However, on the cross he dealt with these “thieves” on our behalf. Here God offers us healing for all regrets for that which was done or left undone. Here God offers us hope even when we have come to the end of our rope. One of the thieves who died with Jesus looked to him for salvation and found it! Blessed are all who do the same!

Jesus, help us rebuke the “thieves” of regret and fear and hold fast to you!

Ask: Which “thief” is pressing you most today? Pray about it.

Read: Luke 23:32-43; Romans 5:1-11

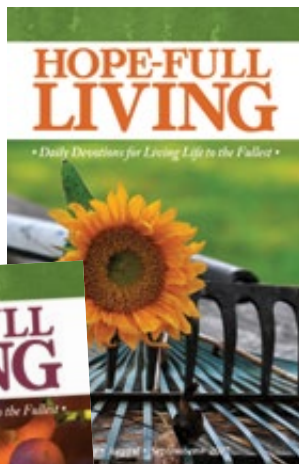
*Ted Zimmerman
Napa, CA*

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