

LIVING

Creative
Communications
Sample

THE GOSPEL LIFE

daily devotions for christians on a mission

▪ The Season of Lent ▪



Ash Wednesday

Losing Your Life

Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Matthew 10:39

Challenge:

Describe someone you admire as a servant.

In what practical way might you follow that example this week?

Read:

Matthew 10:34-39

Philippians 2:1-8

Who stands out for you as an example of servant leadership for Christ's sake? I think of my father-in-law who humbly served as a high school teacher and coach. He touched many lives. I also treasure meeting a church leader in Slovakia who was imprisoned by the Communist government and forced to serve as a laborer until almost 70 years old. He lost his life for Christ's sake and then was chosen to lead the church as a vibrant and authentic witness to his Savior.

Jesus asks his disciples to take up their cross and follow him as they lose their lives for his sake. He then humbles himself and becomes obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Because he lost his life, he gained the victory for us—a resurrection life for all eternity. How will you lose your life so that others might find Christ?

Lord, make me a servant today for your sake.

—Stephen J. Carter
Oakville, MO

Thursday After Ash Wednesday

The Last Sacrifice

But he was pierced 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:
Today and everyday, share the story of Christ with someone new.*

*Read:
Isaiah 52:13–
Isaiah 53:12*

Welcome to the annual season of Lent. Lent is a time of reflection on Christ's suffering and death on the cross for our sins. As we embark on this six-week journey, we should remember and meditate on the great sacrifice that was made on our behalf. Invite others to gather with you in midweek Lenten services that yearly repeat the story of Christ's sacrifice. This may be the first time they hear about our Lord and Savior's love for them.

Read your Bible. Retrace the sorrow, the pain and agony, the betrayal that Christ endured.

Pray for yourself. Pray for others. Pray for Christ.

Let your heart break as the reality sets in.

My Savior, provide me with the strength to endure trials I encounter because of my belief in you.

*—Darla Panabaker
Breezy Point, MN*

Friday after Ash Wednesday

Go With God, Not Against Him!

*"Pick me up
and throw
me into the
sea," Jonah
replied,
"and it will
become calm.*

*I know that
it is my fault
that this
great storm
has come
upon you."*

Jonah 1:12

*Challenge:
How quickly
can you turn
around and
change direc-
tions from
the place you
know you
should not
be going?*

Every hour of every day in every life the call of God comes to us. And every time the call of God comes, the command to "Go!" is central to it. Whether a prophet by profession or by opportunity, every Christian is called and sent to speak of what God has done. We preach Christ crucified, then—God's gift of his Son for the sins of the world. To act otherwise is sure disaster, if not now, then certainly in eternity.

*Father, align my movement with yours,
my mission with yours, my heart with
that of your Son Jesus in whose name
I pray.*

—Scott K. Seidler
Kirkwood, MO

Read:

Jonah 1

Acts 5:33-39

Mark 9:38-41

Saturday after Ash Wednesday

Ready Or Not!

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

1 Peter 3:15

Challenge: Practice giving the reason for your hope with a Christian friend today.

Perhaps writing out some of your ideas would be helpful.

Read:

1 Peter 3:8-22

Psalms 71

God's people are ready ... to share their hope! Hope is a powerful, yet subtle, word. It can seem so passive, yet is so vital. We use it so often that it has lost much of its meaning.

Hope for people of God is knowing that even when there is no hope ... there is hope, in Jesus Christ! Hope is knowing that even though life looks only like Good Friday, Easter is on the way. Hope trumps experience.

1 Peter 3:15 can also be misunderstood. It is not saying to us that we need to know all the "answers," but rather it says that we need to be ready to tell people why we have hope in the Lord Jesus. And we have hope in Christ because he has saved us through his death and resurrection!

Lord, thank you for the gift of hope. Hope is not a wish, but hope is knowing that you continue to love and forgive me. Fill me with hope as I share your hope with an often hope-less world.

—Rich Bimler
Bloomingdale, IL

First Sunday in Lent

Admonishing!

To admonish you as my beloved child...

1 Corinthians 4:14

*Challenge:
Rethink how you go about admonishing an erring brother or sister in Christ.*

Read:

Psalm 81

Colossians 3:12-17

What crosses your mind when you hear the word *admonish*? Does it mean for you a harsh, condescending conversation?

Webster's dictionary offers a different thought: "to reprove gently or kindly, but seriously ... to put one in mind of something forgotten."

That's what the Apostle Paul had in mind when he wrote to the Christians at Corinth. They had forgotten who they were and whose they were by the grace of God. He was inviting them to remember and renew their commitment to Christ's love and Christ's Church.

That's a reminder for us as we admonish a brother or sister in Christ.

Lord Jesus, help me when I see a need to admonish a believer in Christ to do so in loving and caring ways.

—Walter M. Schoedel
Webster Groves, MO

Monday, Week One

Reconciliation

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:17-18

Challenge:
What person do you know who needs to hear the good news of reconciliation through Jesus? How might God use you as a minister of reconciliation?

Read:
Luke 15:11-31
Colossians 1:19-23

Have you heard of mediation? The goal of mediation is for everyone to suffer equally. When all parties are equally miserable, mediation is complete.

Mediation is *not* reconciliation. Reconciliation is what happens when estranged parties are brought together and their differences resolved so they can live together in love and peace. Joy characterizes those who are reconciled. Jesus is the sinner's reconciler. Because of our sin, God is grieved.

Enter Jesus the reconciler. Willingly and lovingly, Jesus obeys the Father, dying for us so that we might become righteous before God. By faith in Jesus we embrace God once again, and he embraces us. Joy breaks forth in heaven and in our hearts.

Father, let me know your forgiving embrace. Make me bold to take the good news of reconciliation in Jesus to others.

—Donald Neidigk
Rio Rancho, NM

Tuesday, Week One

Are You Facing Out?

For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified.
1 Cor 1:22-23

Challenge: What can you do this week to help people see that the message of the cross is meant for them personally?

Read:
Colossians 2:13-15
John 19:17-22

When my father graduated from the seminary, my mother gave him a ring with a cross at the center. But in his first weeks as a new pastor in Odell, Nebraska, a farmer observed, “You’re wearing that ring all wrong. You have it so the cross is facing you. But the cross should be facing out to the people you meet.” My dad has been wearing that ring “facing out” ever since.

It’s tempting to treat Christ’s cross as something that is just for us. We can look at it as a personal memento or a secret comfort. Is that God’s desire? The message of forgiveness and heaven is meant to be something that we share prodigally in our day-to-day lives. Our goal as Christians is that the cross of Christ be “facing out” in how we love, forgive, and care for others as Christ did for us.

Crucified Christ, help me show the world what your cross means.

—Mark Zimmermann
St. Louis, MO

Wednesday, Week One

Forgiven

The next day
John saw Jesus
coming toward
him, and said,
“Behold, the
Lamb of God,
who takes
away the sin of
the world!”

John 1:29

Challenge:

There are
people around
us who do
not yet know
that Jesus
died for them.
Pray that God
will reveal
the name of a
person to you.
Look for an
opportunity
to share for-
giveness with
him or her.

Sacrifice is a key concept in the ways of God. Every morning and evening a lamb was sacrificed in the Temple for the sins of the people of Israel. Early on in the Bible, God promised that he would send the Messiah to save us from our sins. To pay the complete penalty for sin, a life had to be given. God graciously provided the sacrifice himself.

The sins of the whole world were removed when Jesus sacrificed his life for us. That means that Jesus paid the price of my sin by his death. I receive the benefit of that gift whenever I apply that forgiveness to my life.

Jesus, thank you for loving me enough to die in my place and take away my sin. Let me never take your generous sacrifice for granted.

—Rod Pasch
Slidell, LA

Read:

John 1:29-34

Easter Sunday

Go And Tell!

He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead.
Matthew 28:6-7

Challenge: Celebrate your new life in Christ today. And follow the angel's command.

*Read:
Matthew 28*

The angel's three greatest words of Easter? "He has risen," of course. Wrapped up in those three words is the story of our salvation. Sin can no longer defeat us. Death no longer has a hold over us. He has risen. Victory is ours. Our new life in Christ begins today.

Our response? That comes from the angel's next three greatest words of Easter. "Go and tell," the women heard him say. And tell they did. The salvation story spread from the garden tomb to the city of Jerusalem to the world.

Celebrate the angel's three greatest words of Easter this day. And follow the angel's next three greatest words each day and forever.

Lord, you have given me new life through your death and glorious resurrection. Give me the words to share that joyous truth.

*—David Mead
St. Louis, MO*