

Introduction To This Guide

These daily devotions are provided to encourage you to listen and reflect on how God is speaking to you during this Season of Lent. The question at the end of each day's contemplation is intended to foster further reflection and prayer throughout the day. In addition, space is provided for you to document your thoughts on how you hear God speaking to you at this time. May you be blessed and transformed through the Holy Spirit as you ponder God's word during this most holy of seasons. ++ *Provided by:* Community Missions Inc., 1570 Buffalo Ave., Niagara Falls, NY 14303, Phone: (716) 285-3403, www.communitymissions.org

Where Do I Begin?

Begin each day with the Prayer of Illumination to help, prepare your heart to hear God's word for you. Read "to be formed and transformed rather than to gather information...Read with a vulnerable heart. Expect to be blessed...Read as one awake, one waiting for the beloved. Read with reverence."

Let us Pray a *Prayer of Illumination*:

All-Seeing One, above me, around me, within me —

guide my vision as I engage with your sacred words.

Look down upon me, look out from within me, look all around me.

See through my eyes, hear through my ears, feel through my heart.

God of Wisdom, touch me where I need to be touched;

and when my heart is touched, give me the grace to lay

down this Holy Book and ask significant questions:

Why has my heart been touched by you?

How am I to be changed through your touch?

All-Seeing One, I need to change, I need to look a little more like You.

May these sacred words change and transform me.

Then I can meet You face to face...when I shall be healed forever.

Your Word and the touch of your Spirit bring healing...

a healing that will last.

O Eye of God, look not away.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,

and put a new and right spirit within me. Amen.

Adapted from *A Tree Full of Angels* by Macrina Wiederkehr [As quoted in *A Guide To Prayer For All God's People*, Job & Shawchuck, The Upper Room]

TUESDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK - Day 21

DOING, DOING, DOING

Matthew 7:21-27

Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?" Then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers."

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on the house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell - and great was its fall!"

LISTEN AND HEAR

There is more to following Jesus than being a perpetual motion machine. Henri Nouwenⁱⁱ talks frequently about being in communion with God. Nouwen says that "A lot of people are asking for the spiritual life and what they really want is to feel good about themselves." What some fail to realize is that doing God's will comes from being in relationship and communion with God. We cannot know God's will for us unless we spend time getting to know God.

Jesus uses the illustration of a man who builds his house on a rock. Nouwen sees how Jesus chooses his twelve disciples (Luke 6:12-19) as an apt illustration of the rock:

"At night he went up to the mountain to pray. In the morning...he called his disciples together. In the afternoon he went out with them...preached the word of God and healed the sick... Communion with God, community, ministry. That is the order of things...pray...form community, and then with community to minister." But we reverse it: we want to do things and then when they don't work, we ask the community, and then when that doesn't work we pray about it.

If we want to *do the will* of God, as Jesus did, then we must foster a relationship with God, as Jesus did. Nouwen suggests we use the order that he sees Jesus using in order to seek God's guidance for action. Nouwen's whole premise is that *we are God's beloved*, and God wants to spend time with those whom he loves. That is the rock on which we stand. When we spend time with loved ones, then we can most effectively serve and minister on their behalf.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, lead my heart to pursue your presence. Help me to "claim my beloved-ness" in you and seek to do your will from that place in your heart. Amen

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

In what ways do you *claim your belovedness* in God?

Visit www.HopeForNiagara.org for more spiritual resources.

Lent 2022 – Day 21

A Guide for Devotion and Prayer



Return of the Prodigal, Rembrandt (1663-1669)

TUESDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK *DOING, DOING, DOING*



This week's devotional resource was written by Rev. Wendy Depew Partelow, President of the American Baptist Churches of New York State Board of Missions, and edited by Rev. Mark H. Breese of Community Missions. The content was created specifically keeping in mind the populations served by Community Missions.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Scripture Verses are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), HarpurCollins Publishers, 1989.

The choice of Daily Scripture texts are taken from Lent & Easter, Wisdom from Thomas Merton, Linguori Publications.

ⁱ Paula Ripple, Growing Strong at Broken Places, as quoted in A Guide to Prayer for All God's People, Job & Shawchuck, The Upper Room, p. 255-6.

ⁱⁱ James M. Efird, in Jeremiah Prophet Under Siege, Judson Press, Valley Forge, 1979, p. 100.

ⁱⁱⁱ Charles de Foucauld, Meditations of a Hermit, as quoted in A Guide to Prayer for All God's People, Job & Shawchuck, The Upper Room, p. 111.

^{iv} Richard J. Foster, Prayer, HarperCollins Publishers, 1992., p. 2-3

^v Henri J. M. Nouwen, Beloved: Henri Nouwen in Conversation, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007. p. 46,48,18.

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