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**Why has my heart been touched by you?**

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**O Eye of God, look not away.**

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## SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT - Day 12

### *AWAKENING TO THE LORD'S GLORY*

Luke 9:28-36

Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings - one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" - not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

### *ENCOUNTERING THE CHRIST*

The refrain from the popular Christian song by MercyMe comes to mind: *Surrounded by your glory, what will my heart feel? Will I dance for you Jesus, or in awe of You be still? Will I stand in your presence, to my knees will I fall? Will I sing hallelujah, will I be able to speak at all? I can only imagine, I can only imagine...*

But we really can't *imagine*. When we put ourselves up on that mountain and are overshadowed by that cloud; when we hear God speak, our hearts pounding out of our chests, what will our heart feel? Well, the disciples were *there*, and the text says they were *terrified*.

After God announces that Jesus is the Chosen Son, three words follow, ...*listen to him*. But the disciples still have to face their own *cloudiness* about who Jesus is. Peter has previously proclaimed Jesus, "The Messiah of God," and Jesus has followed that up by telling them that he "must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. [And that] any who want to become his followers [must] deny them-

selves and take up their [own] cross *daily...*” (Luke 9:20, 22-23) Then they ascend the mountain to pray and distinctly hear the voice of God tell them: *This is my Son...Listen to him!* But did they really *hear* the ramifications for their own lives, and even imagine the weaknesses they would have to confront in themselves? I can’t even imagine...

*PRAYER*

Heavenly Father, help me to listen to your Son Jesus. Give me the courage to follow him daily, taking up my cross daily - however that is defined by my life. Give me strength in my weakness, and sustain me in your loving care. Amen

*FOR FURTHER REFLECTION*

What is the cross I bear when trying to live out God’s call?

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# Lent 2022 – Day 12

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## MONDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK - Day 13

### *HUNGRY FOR THE KINGDOM*

Luke 6:20-26

Then he looked up at his disciples and said:

Blessed are you who are poor, for yours in the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice on that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.

But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.

### *BLESSED ARE...*

We have been in this Lenten study for almost 2 weeks. Perhaps you are taking the call to repentance seriously and you wonder when you will turn the corner and *feel forgiven*. Or perhaps the appeal to give sacrificially has generated some *push back* from those closest to you: family, friends, colleagues or spouse. If that is the case then be encouraged.

Walter Russell Bowie, in his book *The Compassionate Christ*,<sup>tt</sup> points out that this sermon given by Jesus in Luke 6 is directed at the disciples. Bowie says "it is as though [Jesus] said, *I know all about it. You are bothered about what you left behind and what you do not have. You get so discouraged you could almost cry. Sometimes you are afraid. A little more and you might pity yourselves. But do you know what the truth is? You are the ones on whom the blessing rests. You're the ones who can be glad. Look up, and look ahead. Yours will be part of the victory of the kingdom of God; and having been poor and hungry and sometimes scared will seem to have been nothing in comparison with the joy of that!*"

But we can see the message is broader even than that. The message is "for all those who could be called poor." Bowie points out that Jesus knew what it was to stand before an unjust judge; and Jesus "saw

the quality of soul that could develop” in those who were treated unfairly. Jesus knew the patience, courage, and faithfulness generated by their struggle.

Furthermore, in Jesus’ scolding of the rich and satisfied, he is encouraging and highlighting his concern “for the poor and the afflicted; for social righteousness, and [Jesus’] indignation against all callousness and cruelty of the strong against the weak.” Jesus is leading his disciples, and us, to the same awareness.

*PRAYER*

Almighty God, thank you for all the blessings you have bestowed upon me. Give me the strength to endure whatever challenges may come as I continue to follow you. Give me discernment and wisdom as I seek your will. Amen

*FOR FURTHER REFLECTION*

Name one thing you struggle with and pray for God’s help?

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## TUESDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT - Day 14

### *DOING JUSTICE*

Isaiah 1:10, 16-17, 21-28

Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom! Listen to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah!

Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before you eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan plead for the widow...

The faithful city ... that was full of justice, righteousness lodged in her -- but now murderers! Your silver has become dross, your wine is mixed with water. Your princes are rebels and companions of thieves. Everyone loves a bribe and runs after gifts. They do not defend the orphan, and the widow's cause does not come before them. Therefore says the Sovereign, the LORD of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel: Ah, I will pour out my wrath on my enemies, and avenge myself on my foes! I will turn my hand against you; I will smelt away your dross as with lye and remove all your alloy. And I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city.

Zion shall be redeemed by justice, and those in her who repent, by righteousness. But rebels and sinners shall be destroyed together, and those who forsake the LORD shall be consumed.

### *THE ILLUSION OF FREEDOM*

In the United States it has become a common theme to talk about our rights and freedoms: freedom of speech and the right to bear arms are two that currently come to mind. And so we must look hard at those *freedoms* and be sure not to violate them. But with freedom comes responsibility. As human beings our responsibility may be to live and let live; but as Christians, our responsibility is to love our fellow brothers and sisters.

Thomas Merton, in *Lent and Easter Wisdom*,<sup>ttt</sup> says, "Our abdication of responsibility is...an abdication of liberty." What I think Merton is talking about is that to *leave it there*, to say, "O that is your right to say whatever you want," or "yes that is your right to point your gun

at me because you feel threatened,” is to sidestep the issue of freedom. As Christians, both our speech and our actions are to reflect the love of Jesus the Christ.

I think the Apostle Paul said it best, “‘All things are lawful,’ but not all things are beneficial. ‘All things are lawful,’ but not all things build up. Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other.” (1 Corinthians 10:23-24) Our goal as those who follow the Christ should be to seek justice and righteousness in the world through faithfulness to God’s loving kindness.

*PRAYER*

Almighty God, guide me toward peaceful and loving ways, using my freedom to bring peace and justice to a hurting and wounded world.  
Amen

*FOR FURTHER REFLECTION*

Name one injustice that you know of that needs rectifying?

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## WEDNESDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK - Day 15

### *THE NEED FOR RE-FORMATION*

Jeremiah 18:1-17 (edited)

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: "Come, go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words." So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good to him.

Then the word of the Lord came to me: Can I not do with you, O House of Israel, just as this potter has done? Says the LORD. Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand...At one moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, but if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will change my mind about the disaster that I intended to bring on it. And at another moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, but if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will change my mind about the good that I had intended to do to it. Now, therefore, say to the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: Thus says the LORD: Look, I am a potter shaping evil against you and devising a plan against you. Turn now...from your evil ways, and amend them.

But they say, "It is no use! We will follow our own plans, and each of us will act according to the stubbornness of our evil will." Therefore, thus says the Lord: Ask among the nations: Who has heard the like of this? The virgin Israel has done a most horrible thing...All who pass by it are horrified...like the wind from the east, I will scatter them before the enemy [they will see] my back, not my face, in the day of their calamity.

### *THE TENSION THAT MOLDS US*

Paula Ripple, in her book *Growing Strong at Broken Places*,<sup>1</sup> recalls a discussion she had with a female potter. She sees that *tension* actually shapes the pot: "tension between the pressure applied from the outside and the pressure of the hand on the inside." And that "life, like this pot, is the result of what happens on the outside and what is going on inside..."

We can hear the tension: God’s will to mold Israel God’s way, and Israel’s pressure from the surrounding community to conform to their way of life. And so the pot is *spoiled in the potter’s hands*. But Ripple’s potter claims that “the tension is God’s gift...that doesn’t permit us to escape its presence.” She claims that the tension creates a “gnawing discomfort” in us as we seek to be “faithful to who we are and who we can become.” We suffer consequences and cry for deliverance. And God, through loving mercy for ‘spoiled vessels and cracked pots’, remembers God’s covenant, reworks the plan, and delivers them once again. A loving parent does not fail to discipline his/her child, but always welcomes them home.

*PRAYER*

Lord God, thank you for your never giving up on us. And even when it creates a tension between us Lord, step in and make a way for us to be united once again. Amen

*FOR FURTHER REFLECTION*

Name a time when you were reworked on the potter’s wheel.

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<sup>ii</sup> James M. Eford, in Jeremiah Prophet Under Siege, Judson Press, Valley Forge, 1979, p. 100.

<sup>iii</sup> 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.

<sup>i</sup> Richard J. Foster, Prayer, HarperCollins Publishers, 1992., p. 2-3

<sup>ii</sup> Henri J. M. Nouwen, Beloved: Henri Nouwen in Conversation, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007. p. 46,48,18.

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## THURSDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK - Day 16

*BARREN BUSHES*

Jeremiah 17:5-8, 10

Thus says the LORD:

Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals, and make mere flesh their strength, whose hearts turn away from the LORD. They shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when relief comes. They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land.

Blessed are those who trust in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit...

I the LORD test the mind and search the heart, to give to all according to their ways, according to the fruit of their doings.

### *IN WHOM DO WE TRUST?*

To trust is a dangerous and scary action. To trust means to believe something is true. To trust means having faith in something. To trust also means to have confidence in someone, to be able to rely on them.

James M. Eford, in *Jeremiah Prophet Under Siege*,<sup>11</sup> says that Jeremiah prophesied in a time "when no one could trust anyone else." He goes on to say that "There can never be a possibility for a good life for anyone unless people can basically trust other people. But in the land of Judah at that moment in history no one could trust anyone."

I wonder how far we have advanced as a society when, 2500 years after Jeremiah spoke, we still (or once again) live in a society where *no one trusts anyone*. So much of our media is slanted one way or the other that no one seems to know what the truth is anymore. We don't trust politicians, we don't trust religious leaders, we don't trust family members. Yet, our text says, *Blessed are those who trust in the LORD*.

So what can we do to gain back our ability to trust? I believe it begins with prayer. And prayer begins by developing an *inner life*. And developing the inner life begins in *solitude*.

According to Charles de Foucauld,<sup>iii</sup> “the soul will bring forth fruit exactly in the measure in which the inner life is developed in it.” Jeremiah claims that those who trust in the LORD are blessed, that even in a year of drought they do not fail to bear fruit, and that the LORD tests the mind and searches the heart according to the fruit produced. So, pray to be blessed, bear good fruit, and trust in the LORD our God.

*PRAYER*

Lord God, help me to develop the kind of life where I can trust in your guidance. And send me a faithful witness that I can trust to lead me in your way everlasting. Amen

*FOR FURTHER REFLECTION*

Name something you have done to bear fruit for the kingdom.

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### THURSDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK BARREN BUSHES



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.

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## 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](http://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."ttt

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]

## FRIDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK - Day 17

### *THE SECRET TO GIVING AND PRAYING*

Matthew 6:1-8

Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

### *PRAYER AND*

Jesus says *beware of practicing your piety before others...* *Piety* is a devotion to religious observance, but *prayer* is entering the heart of God.<sup>i</sup> Richard Foster, in his book *Prayer*, says prayer "is about a love relationship: an enduring, continuing, growing love relationship with the great God of the universe, and overwhelming love invites a response." Our response to God's *overwhelming love* for us is to love well in return. So, "to be effective pray-ers, we need to be effective lovers...real prayer comes not from gritting our teeth but from falling in love"—falling in love with God. Prayer and giving alms is an outgrowth of that love.

Foster says the key to the heart of God is prayer, and that Jesus is the door. Jesus teaches us the way to God's heart; and reveals the God's love for us through his (Jesus's) healing ministry, powerful witness, and inclusive love for all people. Prayer and giving alms is our humble and grateful response.

PRAYER

Help us, O God our Creator, to be always loving. Help those who observe us to see only the humility and love we have for you, and no self-  
ish motive for recognition and praise. Thank you for your overwhelming love for your people. Amen

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

What are your thoughts about praying and giving in secret?

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Lent 2022 – Day 17

A Guide for Devotion and Prayer



From: freepik.com

FRIDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK  
THE SECRET TO GIVING AND PRAYING



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## SATURDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK - Day 18

### *COMPASSIONATE LOYALTY*

Micah 7:18-20

Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity  
and passing over the transgression  
of the remnant of your possession?  
He does not retain his anger forever,  
because he delights in showing clemency.  
He will again have compassion upon us;  
he will tread our iniquities under foot.  
You will cast all our sins  
into the depths of the sea.  
You will show faithfulness to Jacob  
and unswerving loyalty to Abraham,  
as you have sworn to our ancestors  
from the days of old.

### *PARDONED AND FREE*

*Who is a God like you...?* the prophet asks in awe and wonder, who indeed! Who is this God that allows God's people numerous millennia to get to know, and learn to love their God? Who is this God that obliges us to suffer the consequences of our sins, but only for a time; eventually having compassion and pity on God's people and lifting them out of their murky existence. Who is this God whose steadfast love is unsearchable and unconditional, even in the most trying of circumstances?! Who is this God who *casts all our sins into the depths of the sea* and remembers them no more?

Who is this God who does not break the covenant, even when people repeatedly break their covenant with God? Who is this merciful God that commands that we love our neighbor, bring justice to the oppressed, and take care of the orphan and widow?

Who is this God with unwavering loyalty to humanity, sends God's only Son as a sign of God's new covenant with them? Who is this God who gave this Son so that whosoever believes in him shall have eternal life? Who is this God that allows us to kill and destroy God's Son because we cannot bear the darkness of our own souls that his witness reveals? And who is this God that raises God's Son from

the dead to prove to all who believe that he is indeed the Messiah, the one sent by God to show God's love and forgiveness to all, and to set all people free.

Indeed, it is the one true God who *swears faithfulness...and unswerving loyalty* even today, as *God swore to the ancestors in days of old!*

*PRAYER*

Almighty and compassionate God, thank you for loving and forgiving me. Help me to see my sins of which I still need to repent, and lead me in your way everlasting. Amen

*FOR FURTHER REFLECTION*

How has God shown unwavering love and faithfulness to you?

Four horizontal lines for reflection.

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# Lent 2022 – Day 18

## A Guide for Devotion and Prayer



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