



LENTEN FAST & PRAYER GUIDE

MARCH 5 - APRIL 19, 2025

FASTING & PRAYER

Welcome to the 40-Day Lenten Fast & Prayer Guide. Every year during Lent, followers of Jesus remember the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness resisting the temptations of Satan to turn him away from God and towards human desires of worldly wealth, power, and domination.

In this Lenten season, we are in a turbulent moment in our nation and lives. The forces of division seem to grow stronger while injustice and inequity persist. The desperate cries of those Jesus called us to love and serve echo louder than ever while dissent is discouraged. Yet, Lent calls us not to turn away from these realities but to face them head-on with hearts open to reflection, repentance, and renewal.

All around us are the signs of a growing crisis that threatens to upend the very foundations of our institutions and jeopardize the freedoms and liberties we hold dear. A weakening of our system of checks and balances and the rule of law present real dangers to all Americans.

Social safety nets that have provided vital assistance, to those here and abroad, are on the auction block. There are challenges such as racial division, economic disparities, environmental injustice that are exacerbated by policy decisions. People and families, who are most vulnerable, are now at a greater risk of harm, catastrophe, and even death.

Lent invites us into a space of profound spiritual reckoning. It calls us to examine the state of our own hearts and the health of our communities. It calls us to examine how we have contributed...whether knowingly or unknowingly...to systems that perpetuate harm.

FASTING & PRAYER

As we fast from the world's distractions, we make space to listen to the voice of God calling us into a deeper relationship with each other and to hear the suffering of our neighbors.

As we turn our plates down, let us be moved by the divine call to action that demands we work for a world that more closely resembles God's kingdom.

Our sacred texts remind us that we are equipped to fight in every earthly battle, knowing that God will never leave or forsake us. In 2 Corinthians 10:4, we are encouraged to remember that "...the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds (NKJV). Matthew 18:19 lets us know there is power in our coming together to pray on one accord, and God will answer us. May our prayers rise like incense, and our fasting leads us into deeper communion with Christ and one another.

Prayer changes things, and prayer and fasting even more so. This Lenten Season, we trust that God will meet us at our point of need through our prayers and honor our sacrifices. We trust that we can counter the unfolding and escalating injustices in our midst and the unquestionable damage being done to God's people in our nation and worldwide through our joint action and collective pleas for peace, justice, comfort, righteousness, protection, grace, and mercy.

May God grant our petitions and give us the courage to do our part. Amen.

Below, you will find spiritual resources to support you during your Lenten Fast.

FASTING & PRAYER

EFFECTIVE PRAYERS HAVE THREE PREREQUISITES:

FIRST, we must pray the Word of God. The Bible says God's Word won't return to Him void, but it will accomplish what it was sent for (Isaiah 55:11). This means that whatever God says will happen. His word will be fulfilled and will not return empty-handed. God is not obligated to respond to our words, but He responds to His own. So when we pray His Word, we can expect God to hear our prayer and His word to be accomplished. According to God's word, we know that He hears our prayers. Isaiah 65:24 - Before they call, I will answer; while they are still speaking, I will hear. Again, as we pray His word, He will answer.

SECOND, we must pray in faith. Matthew 21:22 (AMP) says, "And whatever you ask for in prayer, believing, you will receive." When we pray in faith, believing that God hears us and will answer, God will perform His word.

THIRD, we must be on one accord. The Bible tells us that when we are on one accord that God will answer our prayers." Again, I say to you that if two believers on earth agree [that is, are of one mind, in harmony] about anything that they ask [within the will of God], it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. Matthew 18:19 (AMP) Therefore, as we journey together for the next 40 days, we believe that when we focus on God on one accord that God will answer our prayers. James 5:16 (NIV) Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Additionally, we see throughout scripture where God hears the cry of His people and responds. Exodus 3:7-8 (AMP) The Lord said, "I have in fact seen the affliction (suffering, desolation) of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters (oppressors); for I know their pain and suffering. 8 So I have come down to rescue them . . ."

A LENTEN PRAYER: RETURNING TO JESUS

Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner, President, Skinner Leadership Institute
(Adapted by the Faith Table Letter: Returning to Jesus: In Our Time)

Holy and righteous God, in humility and thankfulness, we reflect on Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness, resisting Satan's temptations to turn him away from God and towards human desires of worldly wealth, power, and domination.

Lord, our hearts break as we witness the growing crisis of American obsession with accumulating wealth, power, and control and the abandonment of the people Jesus called us to serve and protect. In this season, O God, give us the moral courage to defend the vulnerable and oppose those willing to ignore the constitutional guardrails of our fragile democracy.

During Holy Week, guide us, O righteous God, to honestly reflect on our temptations to worldly matters and to center our sole loyalty on our God who saves and redeems rather than on any worldly power. We pray for a renewed commitment to return to Jesus as we engage in traditional spiritual practices of reflection, fasting, prayer, repentance, sacrifice, and service. We ask for an even greater resolve to protect those who Jesus commands us to serve.

Help us, Lord God, in this sacred season, to center our hearts and minds on Jesus' final teaching in Matthew 25, "I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger, and you welcomed me, I was naked, and you gave me clothing, I was sick, and you took care of me, I was in prison, and you visited me." Give us new eyes to see the hungry, the thirsty, the naked both in our country and the world's poorest countries who are in great danger of being cut off from aid and support. Enable us to see those losing vital food and health care, especially our Black and Brown brothers and sisters, disproportionately harmed by budget cuts and the elimination of anti-discrimination policies by executive orders. In this holy season of hope and renewal, may we lift our collective voices in total praise to a loving God who reminds that we are all children of the same God.

LENTEN PRAYER

Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie

President General Secretary
National Council of Churches (NCC)

Almighty and Everlasting God, the source of all life and love, we come to you in this Lenten season grateful for your mercies that are new every morning. Forgive us, O God, for the ways we have fallen short of your glory and we confess our sins of omission and commission, and the transgressions that so easily beset us.

Thank you for the quiet whispers of your presence that guides us through seasons of triumphs and trials. Thank you for the beauty of diversity that colors our world. In the varied hues of our experiences, we give thanks for the rich tapestry of our shared humanity. May we always approach every encounter with an open heart ready to learn and love.

We pray for those caught in the crosshairs of change, those who suffer through no fault of their own but by the decisions of others. We pray for those who are burdened with a sense of helplessness in the face of adversity. We pray for your peace, that surpasses all understanding to overcome our fears; and your redemptive love to overcome hate.

*Equip us, Lord, to meet this season with grace. Help us to do what is right and not grow weary. Empower us to embrace even the unknown, transforming it into gateways of opportunities granting us "...wisdom and courage for the facing of this hour, for the facing of this hour." * In Jesus name, Amen.*

** Hymn, God Grace and God of Glory by Harry Emerson Fosdick (1930)*

GUIDING SCRIPTURE

Matthew 25:34-36

34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

Isaiah 58:6

6 "Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke?"

Fasting & Prayer: A Spiritual Lifestyle

Fasting and prayer are not just religious practices but a spiritual lifestyle. They provide divine access to God, spiritual advantage over the enemy, and proper positioning for a breakthrough. Fasting also produces excellent spiritual results, strengthening your faith and deepening your relationship with God.

During these 40 days of fasting and prayer, take time daily to:

- ✓ Meditate on the suggested focus theme and scripture.
- ✓ Go before the Lord in prayer, believing by faith that He hears you.
- ✓ Journal your thoughts, reflections, and revelations.
- ✓ Acts of Service - Look for ways to serve and bless others.

Choosing Your Fast:

We understand that some individuals may be under medical supervision, so we encourage you to consult your physician before beginning. Choose a fast that works best for you and commit to it. Avoid changing your fast on a day-to-day basis.

Types of Fasts:

Normal Fast - Water or juice only; no food.

Daniel Fast - Water, fruits, grains, legumes, and vegetables.

Financial Fast - Avoid shopping for food beyond what is needed.

Media/TV Fast - Reduce or eliminate TV, internet, and radio consumption.

As you commit to this time of fasting and prayer, expect spiritual renewal, breakthroughs, and a deeper connection with God. Stay focused, be disciplined, and trust that God will move these mountains of distraction.

Fasting & Prayer: A Spiritual Lifestyle

Daniel Fast Guide

The Daniel Fast is a biblically-based partial fast inspired by the book of Daniel. It focuses on consuming simple, whole foods while eliminating processed and animal-based products. This fast is not about limiting the amount of food but rather about making intentional choices that honor God with what you eat.

Foods to Include in Your Diet During the Daniel Fast:

- ✓ Fruits – Fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, or canned (without added sugars or preservatives). Examples: apples, oranges, bananas, berries, mangoes, pears, and grapes.
- ✓ Vegetables – Fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, or canned (without additives). Examples: spinach, kale, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, sweet potatoes, and bell peppers.
- ✓ Whole Grains – Whole, unprocessed grains such as barley, brown rice, oats, quinoa, millet, and whole wheat.
- ✓ Nuts & Seeds – Raw, unsalted, and unprocessed varieties such as almonds, cashews, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, pine nuts, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, and sunflower seeds.
- ✓ Legumes – Canned or dried, including black beans, black-eyed peas, cannellini beans, garbanzo beans (chickpeas), great northern beans, kidney beans, lentils, pinto beans, and split peas.
- ✓ Quality Oils – Natural oils include avocado, coconut, grapeseed, olive, peanut, sesame, and walnut oil.
- ✓ Beverages – Distilled water, filtered water, spring water, fresh fruit or vegetable juices (without added sugars), unsweetened almond milk, coconut milk, rice milk, or soy milk.
- ✓ Other Acceptable Foods – Tofu, soy products, vinegar, seasonings, salt, herbs, and spices (without artificial additives or preservatives).

Fasting & Prayer: A Spiritual Lifestyle

Foods to Avoid During the Daniel Fast:

- ✗ Meat and animal products (beef, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy, etc.)
- ✗ Processed and refined foods (white flour, white rice, artificial additives, preservatives)
- ✗ Fried foods
- ✗ Sweeteners (sugar, honey, syrups, artificial sweeteners)
- ✗ Leavened bread (bread made with yeast, baking powder, etc.)
- ✗ Caffeinated beverages (coffee, tea, energy drinks, etc.)
- ✗ Alcoholic beverages

Final Thoughts As You Embark on the Daniel Fast

Remember that this journey is about spiritual growth, discipline, and drawing nearer to God. Stay committed, remain prayerful, and trust that God will honor your sacrifice.

"But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine..."
(Daniel 1:8, NIV)

May your fast be a time of breakthrough, renewal, and divine transformation!

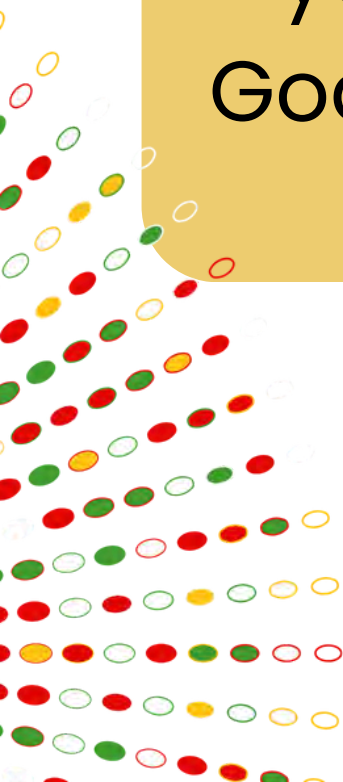
LET US PRAY!

“God delights in revealing Himself to those who are bold enough to bother Him.”

God Lifts the Humble

1 PETER 5:6 -7

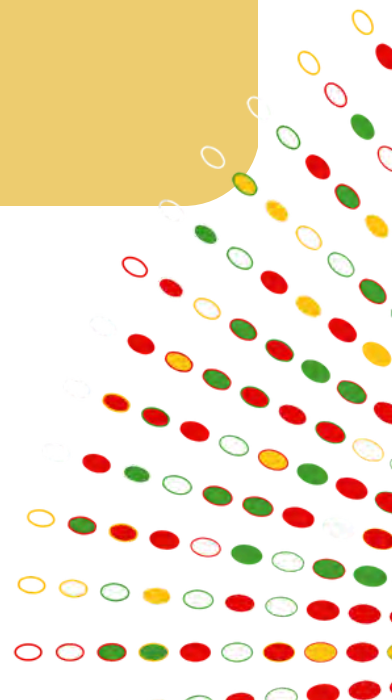
So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor. Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.



Deliverance From Distress

PSALM 118:25-26


Please, LORD, please save us.
Please, LORD, please give us
success. Bless the one who
comes in the name of the
LORD. We bless you from the
house of the LORD.



Prioritize Obedience Over Ritual

1 SAMUEL 15:22

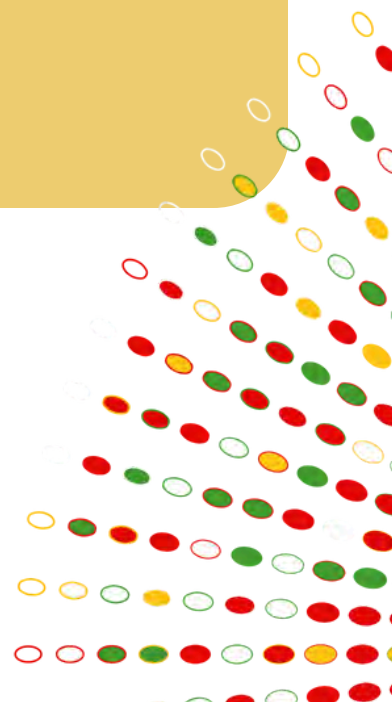
But Samuel replied, "What is more pleasing to the LORD: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams.



Strength Through Testing

MATTHEW 4:1-2

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry.



Guide Us Through These Trials

MARK 1:12-13

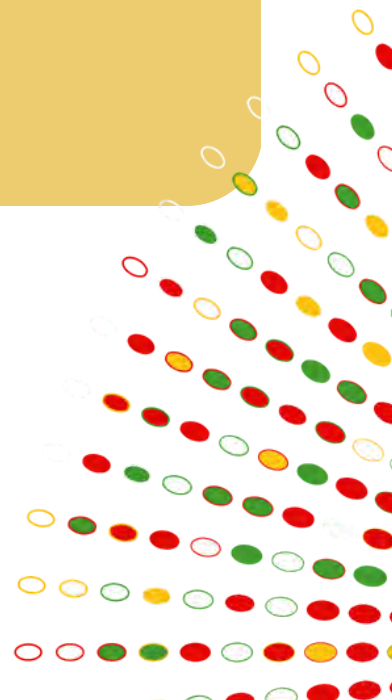
The Spirit then compelled Jesus to go into the wilderness, where he was tempted by Satan for forty days. He was out among the wild animals, and angels took care of him.



Seek God's Approval

MATTHEW 6:1

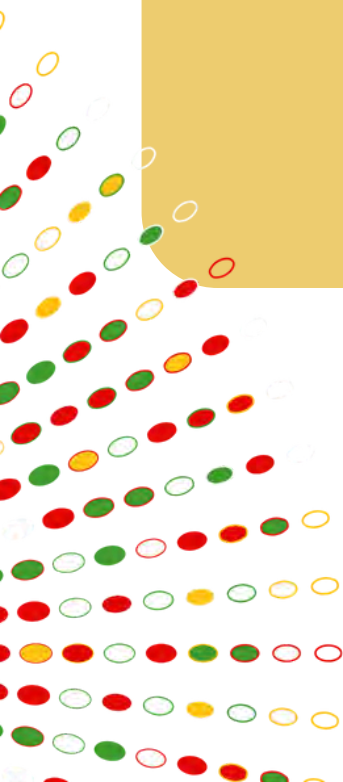
Watch out! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven.



Repent and Live

LUKE 13:3

Not at all! And you will
perish, too, unless you
repent of your sins and
turn to God.



His Strength is Enough

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9–10

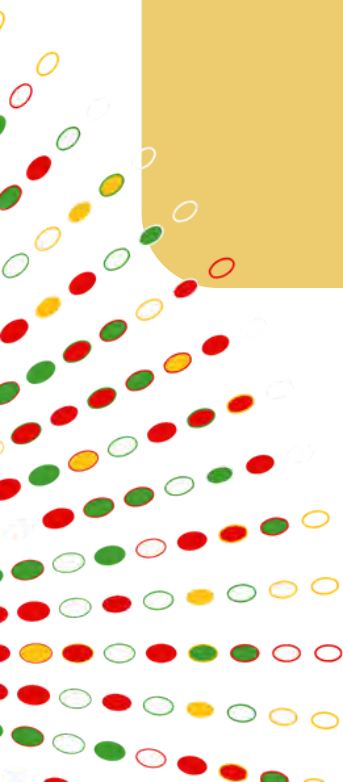
Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. That’s why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.



God Honors a Contrite Heart

PSALM 35:13

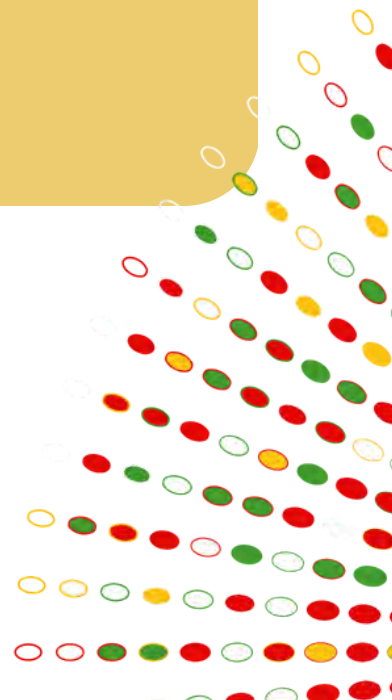
Yet when they were ill, I
grieved for them. I denied
myself by fasting for them,
but my prayers returned
unanswered.



Find Refreshment in Him

PSALM 42:1

As the deer longs for streams
of water, so I long for you,
O God.



Yearning for Divine Presence

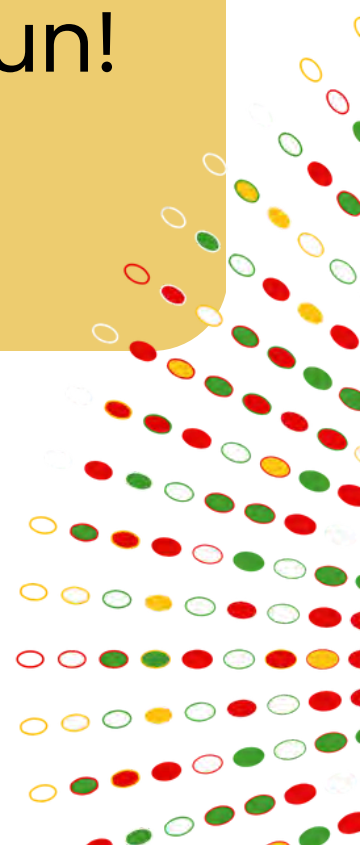
COLOSSIANS 3:1-5

Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory. So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you.

New Creation in Christ.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!



God Desires Sincere Devotion

MARK 7:7-9

Their worship is a farce, for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God. 'For you ignore God's law and substitute your own tradition.'" 9 Then he said, "You skillfully sidestep God's law in order to hold on to your own tradition.



God Rewards Secret Devotion

MATTHEW 6:16

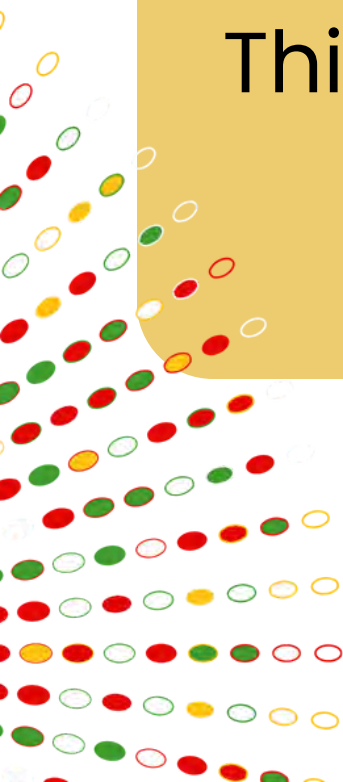
And when you fast, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get.



Hope That Never Fades

COLOSSIANS 1:27

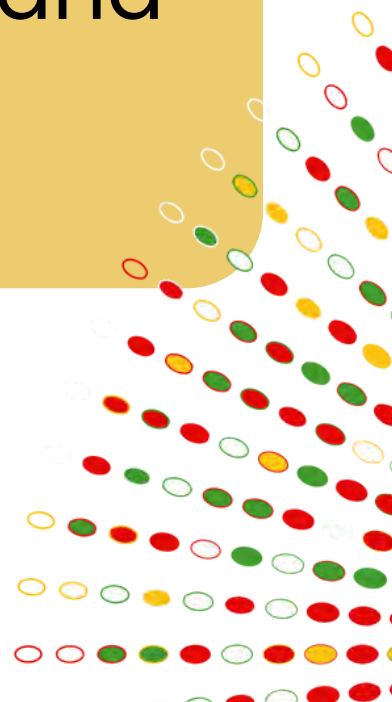
For God wanted them to know that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. And this is the secret: Christ lives in you. This gives you assurance of sharing his glory.



Rejoice! He is *Alive*

JOHN 20:17

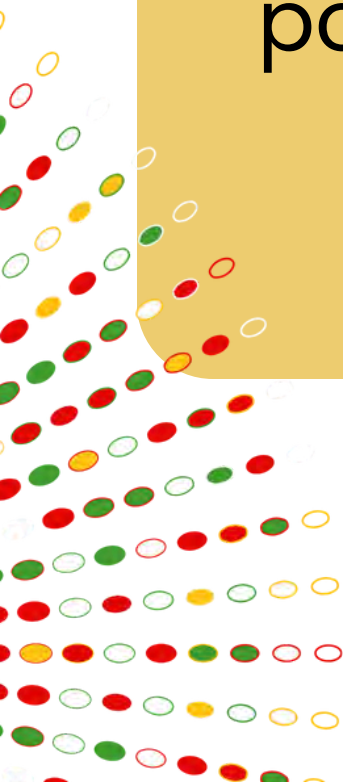
“Don’t cling to me,” Jesus said, “for I haven’t yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”



Faithful in Seeking God

ACTS 10:2

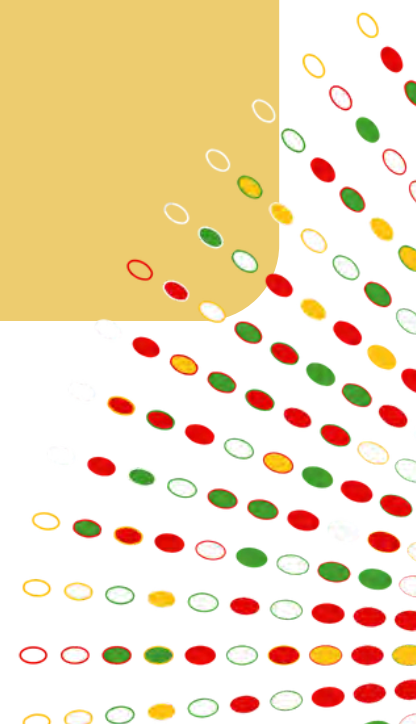
He was a devout, God-fearing man, as was everyone in his household. He gave generously to the poor and prayed regularly to God.



God's Love is Limitless

ROMANS 5:8

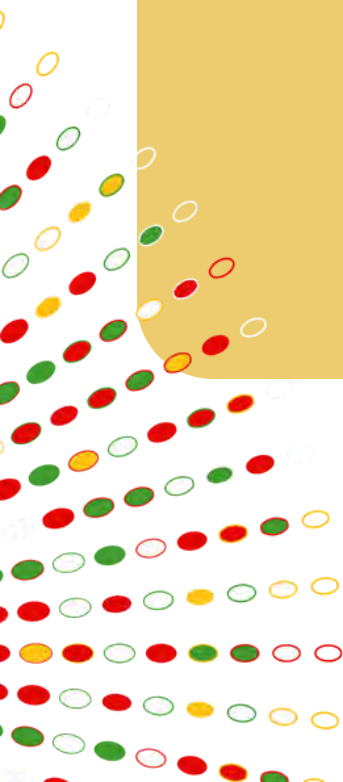
But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.



Endurance Through Trials

MARK 15:3

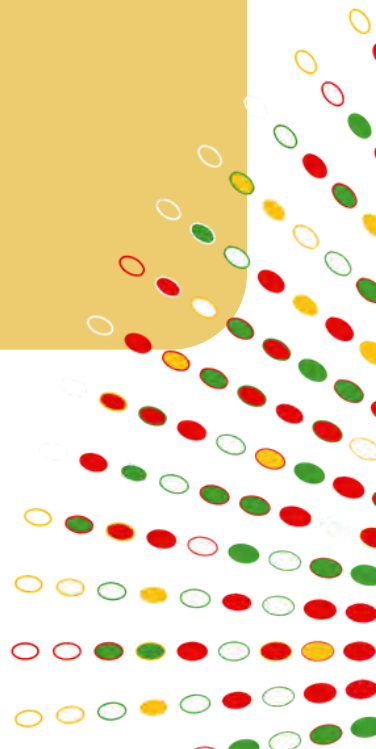
Then the leading priests
kept accusing him of many
crimes.



His Presence Yields Power

PSALM 110:1

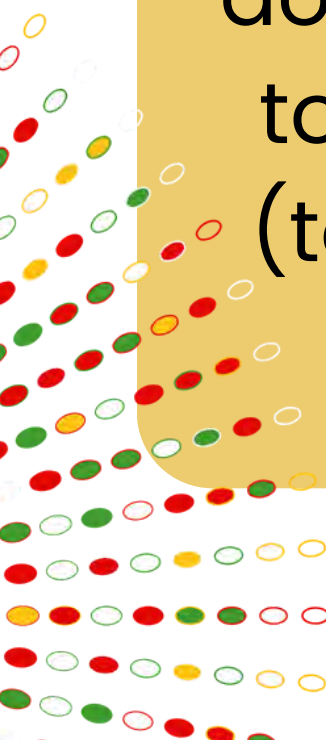
The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit in the place of honor at my right hand until I humble your enemies, making them a footstool under your feet."



Let Faith Speak Truth

ROMANS 10:6 -7

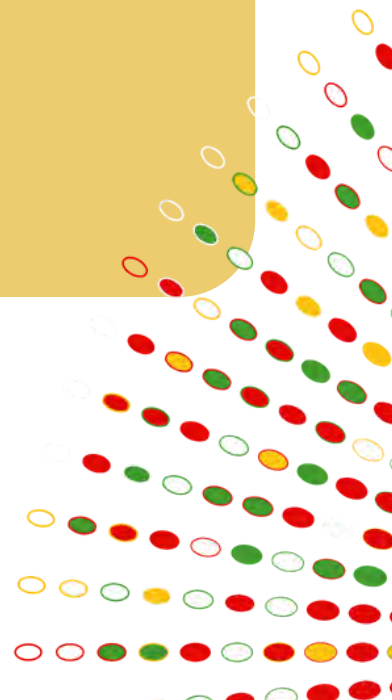
But faith's way of getting right with God says, "Don't say in your heart, 'Who will go up to heaven?' (to bring Christ down to earth). And don't say, 'Who will go down to the place of the dead?' (to bring Christ back to life again)."



Light Overcomes Darkness

MICAH 7:8

Do not gloat over me, my
enemies! For though I fall, I will
rise again.



Tears Turn to Joy

JOHN 20:11 -18

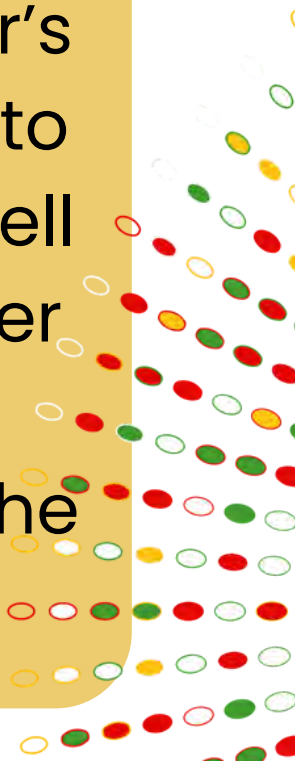
Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in. She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying. "Dear woman, why are you crying?" the angels asked her. "Because they have taken away my Lord," she replied, "and I don't know where they have put him." She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him. "Dear woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her. "Who are you looking for?" She thought he was the gardener. "Sir," she said, "if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him." "Mary!" Jesus said. She turned to him and cried out, "Rabboni!" (which is Hebrew for "Teacher"). "Don't cling to me," Jesus said, "for I haven't yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord!" Then she gave them his message.

Serving Above Self

JOHN 13:12-16

After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked,

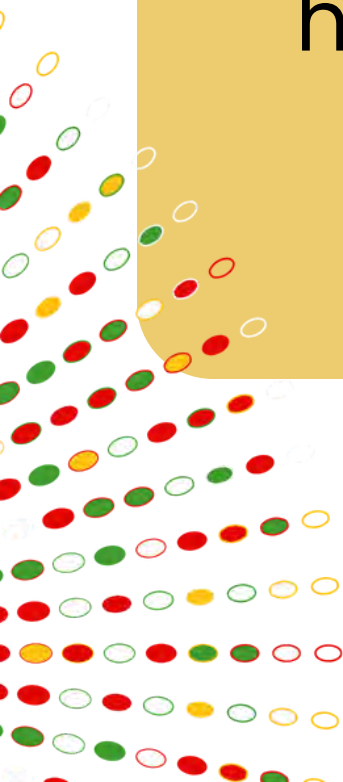
“Do you understand what I was doing? You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and you are right, because that’s what I am. And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other’s feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. I tell you the truth, slaves are not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message.



Victory Through Humility

ZECHARIAH 9:9

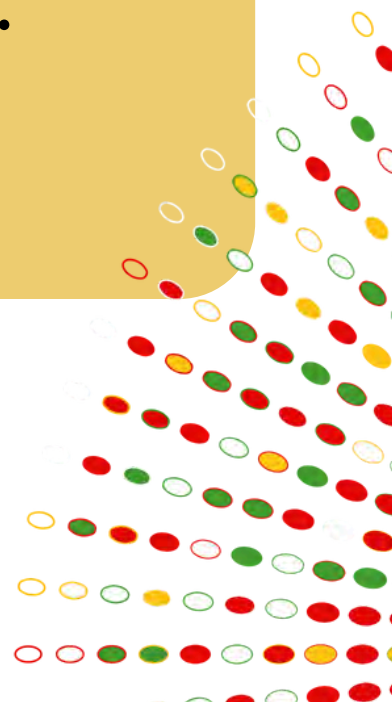
Rejoice, O people of Zion!
Shout in triumph, O people
of Jerusalem! Look, your king
is coming to you. He is
righteous and victorious, yet
he is humble, riding on a
donkey— riding on a
donkey's colt.



Remember His Great Sacrifice

1 CORINTHIANS 11:24

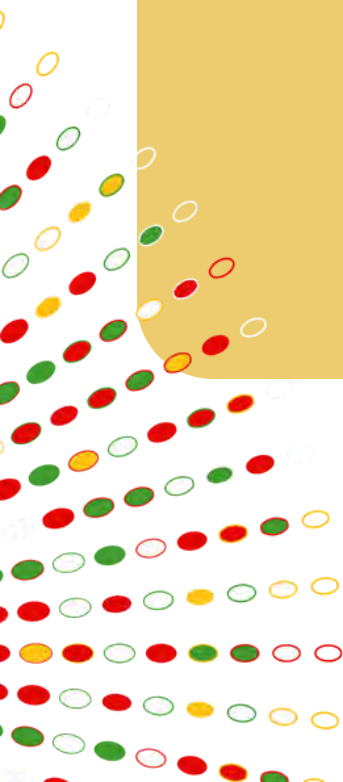
and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, "This is my body, which is given for you.* Do this in remembrance of me."



Victory Through the Cross

LUKE 22:24

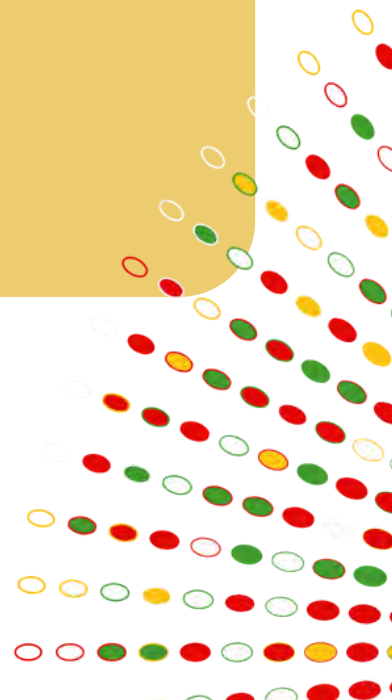
Then they began to argue among themselves about who would be the greatest among them.



He Cares for You

1 PETER 5:7

Give all your worries and
cares to God, for he cares
about you.



Recovery of Our Nation

JEREMIAH 8:20-22

20 The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

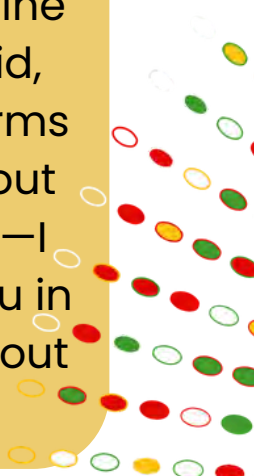
21 For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me. 22 Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

Lord, Prepare My Heart

MATTHEW 26:17–30

On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do you want us to prepare the Passover meal for you?” “As you go into the city,” he told them, “you will see a certain man. Tell him, ‘The Teacher says: My time has come, and I will eat the Passover meal with my disciples at your house.’” So the disciples did as Jesus told them and prepared the Passover meal there. When it was evening, Jesus sat down at the table* with the Twelve. While they were eating, he said, “I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me.” Greatly distressed, each one asked in turn, “Am I the one, Lord?” He replied, “One of you who has just eaten from this bowl with me will betray me. For the Son of Man must die, as the Scriptures declared long ago.

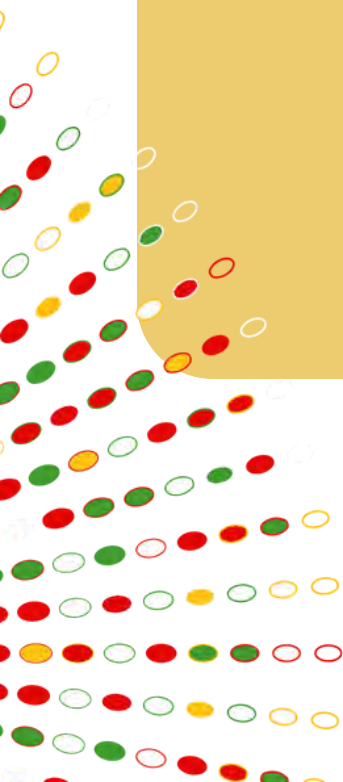
But how terrible it will be for the one who betrays him. It would be far better for that man if he had never been born!” Judas, the one who would betray him, also asked, “Rabbi, am I the one?” And Jesus told him, “You have said it.” As they were eating, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, “Take this and eat it, for this is my body.” And he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. He gave it to them and said, “Each of you drink from it, for this is my blood, which confirms the covenant* between God and his people. It is poured out as a sacrifice to forgive the sins of many. Mark my words—I will not drink wine again until the day I drink it new with you in my Father’s Kingdom.” Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.



Heeding the Master's Plan

MARK 14:16

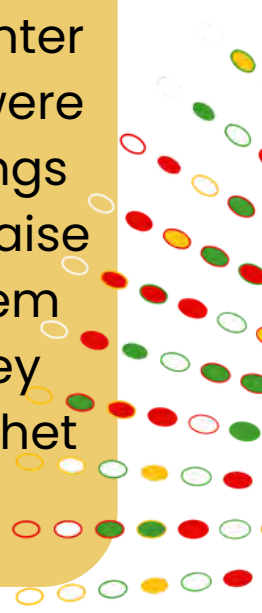
So the two disciples went into the city and found everything just as Jesus had said, and they prepared the Passover meal there.



Embracing the Prince of Peace

MATTHEW 21:1-11

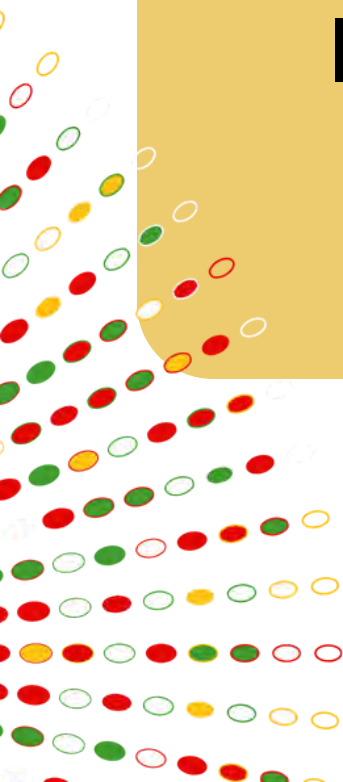
As Jesus and the disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to the town of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of them on ahead. "Go into the village over there," he said. "As soon as you enter it, you will see a donkey tied there, with its colt beside it. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone asks what you are doing, just say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will immediately let you take them." This took place to fulfill the prophecy that said, "Tell the people of Jerusalem,* 'Look, your King is coming to you. He is humble, riding on a donkey— riding on a donkey's colt.'" The two disciples did as Jesus commanded. They brought the donkey and the colt to him and threw their garments over the colt, and he sat on it. Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting, "Praise God* for the Son of David! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the LORD! Praise God in highest heaven!" The entire city of Jerusalem was in an uproar as he entered. "Who is this?" they asked. And the crowds replied, "It's Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."



His Love Never Ends

PSALM 118:1-2

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good! His faithful love endures forever. Let all Israel repeat: "His faithful love endures forever."



God, Teach Me Your Ways

PSALM 119:19-29

I am only a foreigner in the land. Don't hide your commands from me! I am always overwhelmed with a desire for your regulations. You rebuke the arrogant; those who wander from your commands are cursed. Don't let them scorn and insult me, for I have obeyed your laws. Even princes sit and speak against me, but I will meditate on your decrees. Your laws please me; they give me wise advice. I lie in the dust; revive me by your word. I told you my plans, and you answered. Now teach me your decrees. Help me understand the meaning of your commandments, and I will meditate on your wonderful deeds. I weep with sorrow; encourage me by your word. Keep me from lying to myself; give me the privilege of knowing your instructions.



Pouring Out Our Best For Christ

JOHN 12:1 – 8

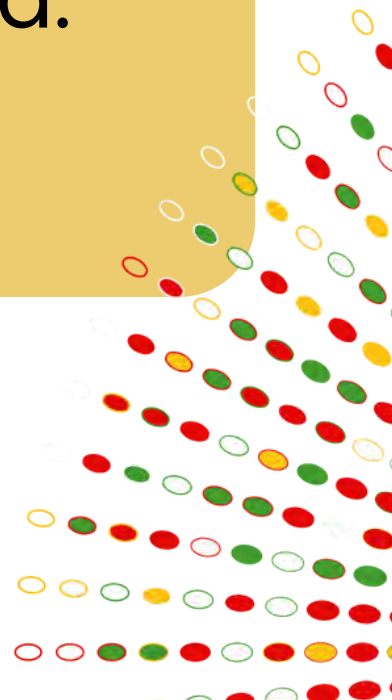
Six days before the Passover celebration began, Jesus arrived in Bethany, the home of Lazarus—the man he had raised from the dead. A dinner was prepared in Jesus' honor. Martha served, and Lazarus was among those who ate with him. Then Mary took a twelve-ounce jar* of expensive perfume made from essence of nard, and she anointed Jesus' feet with it, wiping his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance. But Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would soon betray him, said, "That perfume was worth a year's wages. It should have been sold and the money given to the poor." Not that he cared for the poor—he was a thief, and since he was in charge of the disciples' money, he often stole some for himself. Jesus replied, "Leave her alone. She did this in preparation for my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me."



God is Always With Me

DEUTERONOMY 31:8

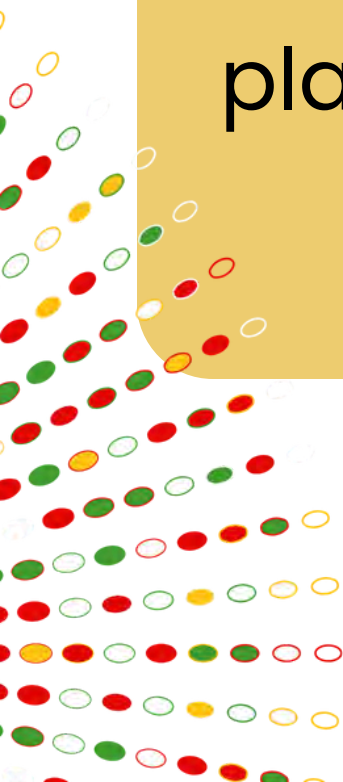
The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.



Embrace Life's Opportunities

ECCLESIASTES 9:10


Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the realm of the dead, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.



Embracing a Life of Gentleness and Patience

EPHESIANS 4:1-3

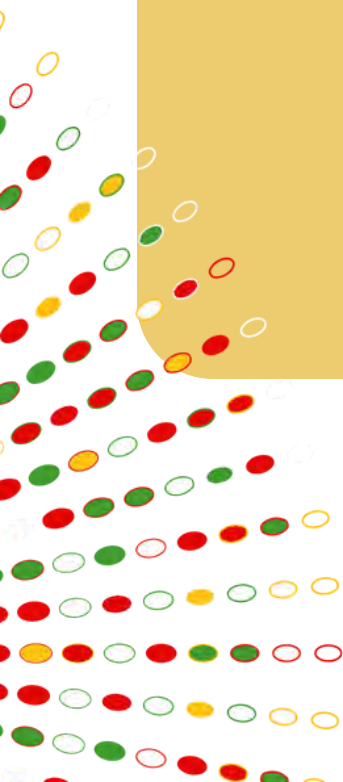
Therefore, I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.



God's Promise to Provide

PHILIPPIANS 4:19

And my God will meet all
your needs according to the
riches of his glory in Christ
Jesus.



God's Right Hand Prevails

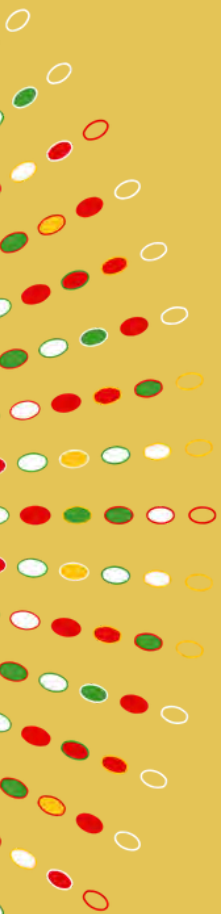
PSALM 20:6-9

Now this I know: The Lord gives victory to his anointed. He answers him from his heavenly sanctuary with the victorious power of his right hand. Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm. Lord, give victory to the king! Answer us when we call!





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NETWORK



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