



LENT

GUIDE



Chilliwack Campus
Agassiz Campus
Promontory Campus
Lake Errock Campus
Harrison Ministry Centre

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Central Community Church App



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INTRODUCTION

L E N T

Lent is a season that disturbs many people. Maybe that includes you. Among Protestant Christian communities, Lent can either be seen as a "graceless," "harsh," "legalistic" part of the Christian year or, on the other hand, trivialized into a time to "pick something to give up," like a seasonal spiritual diet plan. Both these characterizations miss the mark.

Lent is a time of "re-initiation" for the Christian in which we come back to the essential events that make us, as the church fathers would say, "little Christs" in the first place: the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and our identification with those events. We have been "crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20) and we have been "raised up with him" (Col. 2:12).

Lent is infused with grace and love, not opposed to it. **Grace is a free gift to those who are in need. Lent is the season to know that need. It is a season to sense again the path of the Christian life and to recognize that an essential part of that journey is dying with Jesus.**

Lent might not be something you're familiar or overly comfortable with. So why are we making a point of emphasizing the Season of Lent at Central?

Two words: The Gospel.

Lent affords us an annual opportunity to laser our focus on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, to contemplate the cost that Jesus paid for our salvation, and the sufficiency of His sacrifice.

The word Lent derives from an Old English word for spring and lengthen. Lent was originally a preparation period for those pursuing baptism but quickly became a season for the church as a whole to symbolically follow Jesus into the wilderness.

The 40 days of Lent (excluding Sundays which are *feast days*) draw on the biblical parallels of the flood narrative (Genesis 6-8), the Israelites wandering in the wilderness (40 years), Moses receiving the Law of God at Sinai (Exodus 24), Elijah's journey to Mt. Horeb (1 Kings 19), and – most significantly – the fasting and temptation of Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4, Mark 1, Luke 4).

*"It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*

Jesus, Matthew 4:4

Lent is a time of disruption – to break from our normal routines – to go into the wilderness ourselves a little bit in self-sacrifice and self-denial. **We do this not to earn anything from God, but to empty ourselves of lesser things in order to fill ourselves with the greater things of the gospel.**

Whereas Advent is a season of *ever-increasing light* as we await the incarnation of Jesus. Lent is a season of *ever-increasing darkness* in approach of the crucifixion of Jesus.

Observing Lent affords us an intentional opportunity to remind ourselves that the resurrection only came after the crucifixion. Celebrating the resurrection of Jesus begins with embracing His suffering – and Lent is the opportunity for the church to do both.

Some think that Lent strikes an unnecessary somber tone. But when practiced rightly, it actually invites us into a *deeper hope* (this has been referred to as *bright sadness*) and culminates in *deeper joy*.

When we prepare ourselves for Easter by entering the sorrow and pain that preceded it, the celebration will be all the sweeter and more joyful.

ASH WEDNESDAY

REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE DUST

"By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, til you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Genesis 3:19

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!

Psalms 51:1-2

The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. There are numerous instances in the Old Testament where someone would pray in sackcloth and ashes. Rending one's garments and putting on sackcloth was a symbol of mourning, ashes, a symbol of repentance.

Ash Wednesday derives its name from the practice of ash being placed in the shape of the cross on the participant's forehead (in our Ash Wednesday services in the past we have placed it on hand), with the words, *"Repent, and believe in the gospel"* or *"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return"* spoken as they're administered. This vivid imagery represents the heart behind the day and entire season of Lent: We are sinners, life is short, and we desperately need gospel grace.

"Christianity tells people to repent and promises them forgiveness. It therefore has nothing (as far as I know) to say to people who do not know they have done anything to repent of and who do not feel that they need any forgiveness. It is after you have realized that there is a real Moral Law, and a Power behind the Law, and that you have broken that law and put yourself wrong with that Power – it is after all this, and not a moment sooner, that Christianity begins to talk."

C.S. Lewis

Prayer

Dear Jesus, it's Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the season of Lent. For the next forty days we have the privilege of fixing our gaze on you – the Author and Perfecter of our faith. For your glory and our growth, we ask you to overwhelm us with fresh mercies and irrepressible grace in the coming weeks.

Don't let this be a typical Lenten season, Jesus. Saturate and empower it with the gospel. It's all about you, Jesus. It is all about your finished work – not our constant failings and vain promises of doing better and doing more. Whatever fasting we may choose to practice, may it be as a betrothed bride, not as gloomy hypocrites. Our deepest repentance is always born out of seeing more of your beauty, more of the gospel, more of you, Jesus.

Indeed, Jesus, we begin Lent today anticipating our wedding, not our funeral. The law has been fulfilled and judgment is complete; the dowry has been paid in full and our wedding dress is your righteousness; the invitations have been sent out and the date has been secured. We praise, bless, and adore you.

Over these next forty days, intensify our hunger and fuel our hope. Break us that you might beautify us. Increase our love for holiness as you supersize our love for your glory. Free us from our idols as you reveal their emptiness and silliness in comparison with your beauty and bounty. We pray in your exalted and worship-worthy name. Amen.

Ash Wednesday Prayer Rooms

Prayer Rooms will be open at our Chilliwack Campus and Harrison Ministry Centre for you to drop in and spend some time in guided reflective prayer. Pastors will be available to connect with and pray with you if you would like.

Chilliwack Campus | 8am - 6pm
46100 Chilliwack Central Road, Chilliwack

Harrison Ministry Centre | 2pm - 6pm
514 Lillooet Road, Harrison Hot Springs

WEEKLY FASTS

EMPTYING + FILLING

While we are not placing an emphasis on fasting corporately this year, below you will find the fasting schedule we have utilized in the past. Each weekly fast represents a common comfort to which our culture runs for distraction. Giving these up models Christ's reign in your life and provides added time to commune with Him through the Word and prayer.

We see Lent as a gift, not a Law, and weekly fasts throughout the season of Lent as an opportunity to commune with Jesus more intentionally. **Fasting isn't only the neglecting of something but replacing it with a filling of a better thing, the best thing: Jesus.**

Week 1 (Feb 17 - 20): Music, Radio, Podcasts

Week 2 (Feb 22 - 27): Food*

Week 3 (Mar 1 - 6): TV & Movies

Week 4 (Mar 8 - 13): Caffeine and Sweets

Week 5 (Mar 15 - 20): Social Media & Internet Browsing

Week 6 (Mar 22 - 27): Shopping for Non-Essentials

Week 7 (Mar 29 - Apr 3): Sleep**

**Week 2: Consider fasting one meal per day for the week or season, one whole day for the week or season, or the week itself.*

***Week 7: Wake up an hour or two earlier or stay up an hour or two later and devote that time entirely to Jesus.*

Consider building each week upon the next. For example, by week 7 you will find yourself fasting from everything listed above.

WEEKLY SERVICE

BLESSING ESSENTIAL WORKERS

Throughout the season of Lent we will give ourselves to prayer. Prayers both of confession, acknowledging our need of the cross, and of thanksgiving, grateful that the death and resurrection of Jesus made the way for our salvation.

As we fixate on the selfless, sacrificial nature of Jesus – culminating at the cross – we will tangibly respond to such grace by serving essential workers in our community throughout Lent. A theme that can be traced throughout the entire Bible is that God's chosen people were always blessed to be a blessing.

Below is a list of the locations we will be providing care packages, refreshments, and thank-you's to.

Life Groups will be given opportunity to sign up and participate in blessing these essential workers in ways that we have pre-arranged with community leaders.

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Week 1 (Feb 22 - 27): | Kent Elementary School |
| Week 2 (Mar 1 - 6): | Kwiyeqel Secondary School |
| Week 3 (Mar 8 - 13): | Promontory Heights Elementary |
| Week 4 (Mar 15 - 20): | City of Chilliwack Operations District of Kent Municipal Hall |
| Week 5 (Mar 22 - 27): | Chilliwack General Hospital |
| Week 6 (Mar 29 - Apr 1): | Save-On-Foods (Downtown Chwk) Agassiz First Responders |

Adults and kids, we invite you to write a note or draw a picture of thanks that can be included in our deliveries to the groups of essential workers above (more details will be available on our website and social media).

Additionally, consider ways that you can bless essential workers in your life as a tangible expression of the sacrificial nature of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

WEEKLY PRAYER FOCUS

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Typically, we invite you to participate in weekly fasts with us as a way to neglect some things in order to replace them with better things. But the past twelve months have been anything but typical. This whole year has felt like going without. Therefore, we want to invite you to approach Lent in an atypical way that we believe will minister to your soul and those around you more tangibly this year.

Rather than a weekly fast we are going to have a weekly prayer focus and weekly act of kindness to essential workers in our community.

We will emphasize prayer in the following three ways:

1. Each weekly prayer focus is outlined in this guide and we invite you to make it a part of your daily prayers that week.
2. Our Chilliwack & Harrison Campuses will be open every Wednesday for you to drop in and find a quiet spot to sit for a time of reverent, reflective prayer. Pastors will be available to pray with you as well.
3. Every week's prayer focus will be incorporated into the following Sunday church service.

Chilliwack Campus: 8am - 6pm

Harrison Ministry Centre: 2pm - 6pm

Every Wednesday throughout Lent (Feb. 17 - Mar. 31)

Week 1: Father In Heaven

Week 2: Hallowed Be Your Name

Week 3: Your Kingdom Come & Will Be Done

Week 4: Give Us Your Daily Bread

Week 5: Forgive Us Our Debts

Week 6: Lead Us Not Into Temptation

When the disciples of Jesus asked Him to teach them to pray He offered them what is now our model for prayer. We refer to it as *The Lord's Prayer*.

When Darrell Johnson wrote a book on the Lord's Prayer he titled it, *57 Words That Change The World* (the prayer is 57 words in the original language), because while it is short, it is rich, powerful, and makes a difference!

The prayer consists of a number of petitions: the petitions in the first half of the prayer are about God's honour, kingdom, and will, and the petitions in the second half are about human needs. Jesus is teaching us a healthy pattern for our prayer lives: When we begin with God, everything's put into its proper perspective.

Jesus isn't giving us a prayer to pray as a *mantra* but as a model for our own prayer. We may choose to pray these exact words reflectively or use it as a model to direct our own words towards similar concerns.

"One of the reasons Jesus prohibited the empty repetitions of prayers is because that's exactly the way we're prone to pray... And it doesn't take long before this fragments the attention span and freezes the heart of prayer. The problem is not our praying about the same old things, for Jesus taught us to pray with persistence for good things. Our problem is in always praying about them with the same ritualistic, heartless expressions."

Donald Whitney

Each week of Lent we will focus on one line of the Lord's Prayer—meditating on it, praying and applying it in a number of ways—and connect it to our *need of the gospel* and *gratitude for the gospel* as we approach the pinnacle of the Christian calendar, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.

WEEK 1

FATHER IN HEAVEN

Matthew 6:9-13

⁹Pray then like this:

"Our Father in heaven

About

We can pray "*Our Father*"—an ascription that was only made possible by the Son of God—because Jesus made a way for us to be adopted into the Family of God. Healthy, God-pleasing prayer begins with the blessed realization that God is our "*Abba-Father*"—our Dearest Father.

That Jesus invites and enables us to call God, "*Father*," reveals His goodness and grace; that He is our "*Father in Heaven*" reveals His greatness and joy.

Pray

1. Thank God for His goodness and praise Him for His greatness.
2. Because He is both loving and powerful we can be confident that He hears us and is able to act. Pray the praises and burdens on your heart to your loving Heavenly Father.
3. While God is our perfect heavenly Father and Jesus the spotless Son, our familial relationships aren't so perfect this side of heaven. Consider what family members the Lord is putting on your heart and spend some time praying for them; the healing and reconciliation that can take place in lives and relationships because of the finished work of Jesus Christ.

*O righteous Father...I made known to them your name,
and I will continue to make it known.*

John 17:25-26

WEEK 2

H A L L O W E D B E Y O U R N A M E

Matthew 6:9-13

⁹Pray then like this...

hallowed be your name

About

In Martin Luther's Grosser Katechismus (Greater Catechism) he asked:

Question: *"How is God's name hallowed amongst us?"*

Answer: *"When our life and doctrine are truly Christian."*

Without dedicating our lives to Jesus, praying *"hallowed be your name"* is just idle talk. Because of the gospel, we can both be made right with our holy God (justification) and be made more holy in our lives (sanctification) to the praise and glory of God.

Pray

1. Let God search your heart. In what ways have you not *"hallowed"* (honoured and set apart as holy) God? Repent of the things brought to mind, knowing that the cross made a way for you to be forgiven.
2. Pray that God would be honoured and set apart as holy in your life, acknowledging that the best way to hallowed His name is to dedicate yourself to lead a life that reverences all that He is.
3. Move toward praise and thanksgiving as you dwell on His attributes and character.

Father, glorify your name.

John 12:28

WEEK 3

YOUR KINGDOM COME AND WILL BE DONE

Matthew 6:9-13

⁹Pray then like this...

¹⁰**Your kingdom come
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven**

About

When we pray *"your kingdom come and your will be done"* we are praying for the final and ultimate establishment of God's kingdom, that we will be conformed to His will in this world, and that God's rule will come to others through us.

Pray

1. Invite God to reveal any ways in which you are not seeking His Kingdom first. And ask God to help you pursue His Kingdom above all else.
2. Pray that what is true in heaven would be true here.
3. Pray for people to come to Christ, that they may experience Kingdom values and benefits now and His Kingdom for all eternity.
4. Ask God to do things on earth as it is in heaven that you believe align with His purposes, while acknowledging, *"but not my will but yours be done"*.

*But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,
and all these things will be added to you.*

Matthew 6:33

WEEK 4

GIVE US OUR DAILY BREAD

Matthew 6:9-13

⁹Pray then like this...

¹¹**Give us this day our daily bread**

About

At this point in the Lord's Prayer the petitions turn from praying for God's glory to praying for ourselves from the heart. The initial petition for daily bread when prayed in the morning is for "today's bread" and when prayed in the evening is for "tomorrow's bread". Implicit is also the gratitude for basic needs met yesterday and today and the request for tomorrow's bread, especially the bread of eternity.

Pray

1. Begin by thanking God for every daily need that He meets that you can think of.
2. Thank God for meeting our greatest need of all in Jesus on the cross, our Bread of Life.
3. Your heavenly Father cares about your smallest and biggest needs. Ask Him.
4. Pray into what you and others need in the midst of COVID-19. Pray for its end, for the families of those who have died, for those serving selflessly on the frontlines, for those experiencing relational strain, for those isolated from relationships, and for those with heightened anxiety and depression due to the pandemic.

I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.

John 6:51

WEEK 5

FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS

Matthew 6:9-13

⁹Pray then like this...

¹²**and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors**

About

There is no way that you can truly pray this line taught by Jesus and remain bitter and unforgiving and here's why: If you experience the mercy of being forgiven of all your sin by an infinitely holy God, you can certainly forgive others of their finite sins against you. The cross of Christ both *forgives us* and *makes us forgiving*.

Pray

1. Take some time to acknowledge and name all of the sins you have committed since you last asked God for forgiveness. Once recalled, repent of each of them as well as those that you are unaware of.
2. Praise God that when you repent, He forgives you.
3. Are you harbouring bitterness and unforgiveness toward anyone? Ask God to give you the strength to forgive them. And ask God if there's anything you need to do to make things right.
4. Jesus made it possible for us to live in right relationship with God. Thank Him. Pray about the ways you can foster good, healthy, right relationships with those around you in light of such grace.

*Be kind to one another, tenderhearted,
forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

Ephesians 4:32

PALM SUNDAY

SAVE US, WE PRAY

The coming King of Zion

⁹*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!*

shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Behold, your king is coming to you;

righteous and having salvation is he,

humble and mounted on a donkey,

on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

¹⁰*I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim*

and the war horse from Jerusalem;

and the battle bow shall be cut off,

and he shall speak peace to the nations;

his rule shall be from sea to sea,

and from the river to the ends of the earth.

¹¹*As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,*

I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

¹²*Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;*

today I declare that I will restore to you double.

Zechariah 9:9-12

¹²*The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!"*

John 12:12-13

Reflection

On Palm Sunday the crowds cheered, Hosanna! This word has two meanings that really build upon each other:

Save, please! and *Salvation has come!*

Whenever we read or sing *Hosanna!* may we be aware of both elements of the word: We have been saved from our guilt and shame and salvation belongs to the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest!

Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus, we'll exhaust the glory of this passage when the Amazon River flows backwards, the sun turns into a snow cone, and yellowfin tuna yodel. Who is it that fulfills Zechariah's magnificent vision? It is you, King Jesus, and we welcome you and rejoice in you on this Palm Sunday.

No other king could vanquish warhorses and warriors, riding the foal of a donkey. No other king could break the battle bow and backbone of warfare by the brokenness of the cross. No other king could replace the dominion of darkness and the tyranny of evil with an eternal reign of grace and peace.

No other king would give his life and death for the redemption of rebels and idolaters like us. No other king can possibly make slaves of sin into prisoners of hope.

Lord Jesus, you are that King – the King of Glory, the Monarch of Mercy, the Governor of Grace, the Prince of Peace – the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! Great is our rejoicing, because great is our salvation! You have come to us and for us, righteous and victorious, loving and sovereign.

By the riches of your grace, continue to free us from waterless pits, broken cisterns, and worthless idols. By the power of the gospel, enable us to live as prisoners of hope and agents of redemption, until the day you return to finish making all things new. We pray in your holy and matchless name. Amen.

WEEK 6

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

Matthew 6:9-13

⁹Pray then like this...

¹³**And lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.**

About

Acknowledging that temptation is necessary for our spiritual growth, to pray “*Lead us not into temptation*” is to ask God to keep us from temptation that would destroy us. To pray, “*deliver us from the evil one,*” acknowledges that victory over Satan can come only through God’s power as we truly depend on Him.

Pray

1. Ask God to reveal areas of temptation, weakness, and vulnerability to the evil one.
2. Ask for grace and power to overcome sin and to experience deliverance from the evil one.
3. What are some corporate temptations that you observe? Spend some time interceding for the church.
4. When we pray “*deliver us from the evil one*” we are acknowledging that God’s power is greater and He can deliver us. Praise God for empowering grace that helps us fight our battles because Jesus has already won the victory over sin and death for us.

*Count it all joy, my brothers,
when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the
testing of your faith produces steadfastness.*

James 1:2-3

GOOD FRIDAY

IT IS FINISHED

And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Luke 23:34

Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lea sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Matthew 27:46

It is finished.

John 19:30

⁶For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷For one will scarcely die for a righteous person – though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die – ⁸but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:6-8

¹²The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!"

John 12:12-13

Reflection

On Good Friday, we commemorate the death of Jesus, the event at the centre of the mystery of redemption.

Our Good Friday services are crafted to help us contemplate, revere, and even embrace the cross. As we approach Easter, it can be tempting to rush past Good Friday or turn away from the cross in discomfort. But we must see the cross as the precursor of joy, an inseparable part of the triumph that we celebrate at Easter.

Good Friday Services

Our online Good Friday service is available On-Demand all day.

Check Central's website to find out if provincial health regulations are permitting small in-person gatherings at this time. If so, you can discover what in-person service times we are offering and register for one.

Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus, for years I struggled with calling the day of your crucifixion "good." How presumptuous on our part. That there had to be a day when you, the eternally glorious Son of God, would be made sin for us is not good at all. But at the same time, that you would freely and gladly give yourself for us on the cross is never-to-be surpassed goodness – quintessential goodness.

Oh, the wonder of it all. From the cross and from your heart came these two impassioned cries: "Father forgive them" (Luke 23:34) and "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). The first required the second. The second secured the first. Together they humble our hearts and fuel our worship.

And then there's the third cry: "It is finished." Nothing is left undone concerning our salvation and for the transformation of our world. Once and for all, perfectly and fully, we have been reconciled to God. You became sin for us that in you, we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21) – the Just for the unjust, the Beautiful One for the broken ones, the Lamb of God for the rebels from God.

Lord Jesus, a million years into our life in the new heaven and new earth, we will still be stunned with awe, worship, and gratitude for the greatness of your sacrifice and love for us. Because you were fully forsaken, we are forever forgiven. Because you exhausted God's judgment against our numberless sins, we now live by the gift of your perfect righteousness. Bow our heads in humility and raise our hands in praise. We pray in your all-glorious, all-grace-full name. Amen.

HOLY SATURDAY

A DAY OF IN-BETWEEN

⁵⁰Now there was a man named Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, ⁵¹who had not consented to their decision and action; and he was looking for the kingdom of God. ⁵²This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁵³Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid. ⁵⁴It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning. ⁵⁵The women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid. ⁵⁶Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

Luke 23:50-56

⁶²The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate ⁶³and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' ⁶⁴Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first."

Matthew 27:62-64

Reflection

Easter Saturday. A day of in between. A grave is about to be emptied, but not yet. The joy of knowing what's coming; the pain of having to wait for it. An analogy for the whole Christian life.

Sam Allberry

Written on the walls of an easement in Köln by someone hiding from the Nazis: "I believe in the sun even when it is not shining. I believe in love even when feeling it not. I believe in God even when God is silent." This is Holy Saturday.

Holy Saturday is a time of reverence, stillness, and expectation. On the eve of Easter, between death and resurrection, we confront the silence of the tomb. While Holy Saturday is a solemn day, it is also a day of great anticipation as the dawn of Easter is about to break.

Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus, how could your family and followers have slept the night of Good Friday? I can only imagine the depth of sadness that seized their hearts. And yet others were euphoric and relieved that you, "the deceiver," could no longer threaten the status quo of the religious community.

As the sun rose on Saturday, no one understood that the most undeserved death imaginable would yield the greatest return calculable. As you were nailed to the cross, the written code – God's law, with all its regulations and requirements – lost all its condemning power over us. With your last breath, you disarmed the powers of darkness, triumphing over all authorities marshalled against God's kingdom (Colossians 2:14-15).

No one realized that your mortal punishment would bring our eternal peace; that your fatal wounding would secure our everlasting healing; that your being crushed under God's judgment would lead to our being cherished by the thrice-holy God (Isaiah 53). Though they had the Scriptures, they had no clue.

And yet the chief priests and the Pharisees did remember your promise of resurrection. They weren't sad about your death; they were mad with fear about the possibility of your life. Having planned to put to death a resurrected Lazarus (John 12:10), they weren't about to indulge a resurrected Jesus.

Oh, silly, sinful men – they'd sooner hold back the rising of the sun than the rising of the Son of God. Resurrection Sunday was coming, and there was absolutely nothing they could do about it. The sadness of Saturday would soon be shattered with the shouts of Sunday: "The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed!" In your triumphant and loving name we pray. Amen.

EASTER SUNDAY

HE IS RISEN

⁹Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

¹⁰For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. ¹¹More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Romans 5:9-11

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶In this you rejoice.

1 Peter 1:3-6

Reflection

If the resurrection is true, then it's all true. If the resurrection is not true, then none of it is true. If Christ literally was raised from the grave, then we have all the reason in the world to have hope and to live transformed lives. If he did not rise from the grave, then the Bible itself says we are to be pitied above all men.

Matt Chandler

About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he wrought surprising feats. He was the Christ. When Pilate condemned him to be crucified, those who had come to love him did not give up their affection for him. On the third day he appeared restored to life and the tribe of Christians has not disappeared.

Josephus (Jewish historian, 93AD)

Resurrection

O God of my Exodus,

Great was the joy of Israel's sons, when Egypt died upon the shore, far greater the joy when the Redeemer's foe lay crushed in the dust.

Jesus strides forth as the victor, conqueror of death, hell, and all opposing might;

He bursts the bands of death, tramples the powers of darkness down, and lives for ever.

He, my gracious surety, apprehended for payment of my debt, comes forth from the prison house of the grave free, and triumphant over sin, Satan, and death.

Show me herein the proof that his vicarious offering is accepted, that the claims of justice are satisfied, that the devil's sceptre is shivered, that his wrongful throne is levelled.

Give me the assurance that in Christ I died, in him I rose, in his life I live, in his victory I triumph, in his ascension I shall be glorified.

Adorable Redeemer, thou who was lifted up upon a cross art ascended to highest heaven.

Thou, who as Man of sorrows wast crowned with thorns, art now as Lord of life wreathed with glory.

Once, no shame more deep than thine, no agony more bitter, no death more cruel.

Now, no exaltation more high, no life more glorious, no advocate more effective.

Thou art in the triumph car leading captive thine enemies behind thee.

What more could be done than thou hast done! Thy death is my life, thy resurrection my peace, thy ascension my hope, thy prayers my comfort.

Easter Sunday Services

Our online Easter service is available On-Demand all day.

Check Central's website to find out if provincial health regulations are permitting small in-person gatherings at this time. If so, you can discover what in-person service times we are offering and register for one.

Prayer

Exalted and resurrected Jesus, we join the apostle Peter's bold declaration of living hope and great joy. For you have risen from the dead, and this good news changes everything.

Because of your resurrection, we're neither afraid to die nor afraid to live; we're not hapless vagabonds on earth but hope-filled children of God. We're no longer enslaved to our sins; we're now wrapped in your righteousness. Those who have "gone to sleep" in you aren't slumbering in the void; they're rejoicing in your presence. Hallelujah!

Because of your resurrection, we're less to be pitied than anybody and more to be grateful than anybody (1 Corinthians 15:14-19). You are the first fruits and guarantee of a whole new order – the "new creation" dominion of redemption and restoration. Everything sad will come untrue, and all things broken will be made new. How we long for that day!

Because of your resurrection, you are already reigning as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. All evil dominions, wicked authorities, and malevolent powers now stand defeated, and one day they will be fully eradicated. Hallelujah, many times over!

Jesus, your death is the death of death, and your resurrection is the resurrection of all things. You died for our sins and have been raised for our justification. Oh, the wonder, marvel, and gratitude that fills our hearts today. We are forgiven, we are beloved, and we are yours!

In light of this living hope and compelling love, this measureless grace and eternal inheritance, free us for spending the rest of our days living and loving to your glory. We pray, Jesus, in your resurrected and reigning name. Amen.

NOTES

Bible Translation

The English Standard Version (ESV)

Prayers

Scotty Smith, "Every Season Prayers: Gospel-Centered Prayers for the Whole of Life"

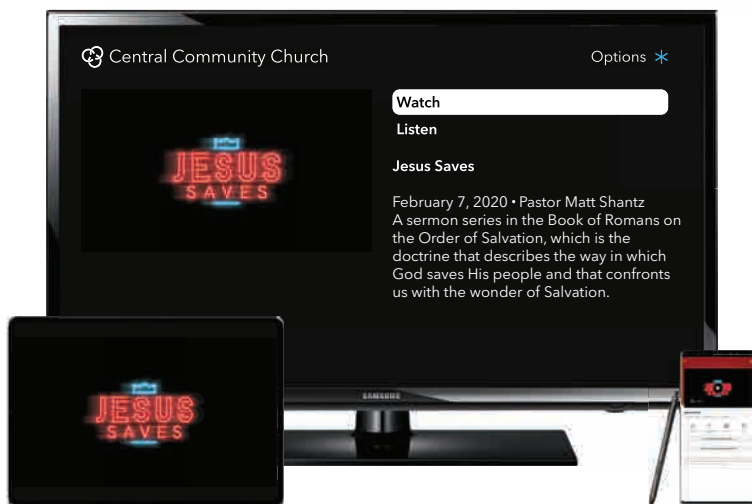
Poems

The Valley of Vision: Puritan Prayers and Devotions



This resource was created by and for
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central365.org

MISSION:

WE EXIST TO BE AUTHENTIC FOLLOWERS OF **JESUS** WHO LEAD OTHERS TO **FOLLOW HIM**.

VISION:

WE AIM TO SEE THE ENTIRE EASTERN FRASER VALLEY **TRANSFORMED** BY THE **GOSPEL** FOR THE **GLORY OF GOD** AND GOOD OF **ALL PEOPLE**.

VALUES:

CENTRED ON THE GOSPEL.
ROOTED IN THE BIBLE.
GATHERED IN COMMUNITY.
EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT.
EQUIPPED FOR MINISTRY.
SENT ON MISSION.



LENT

GUIDE

