



# LENT DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

# INTRODUCTION

Lent is a time of preparation and renewal leading up to Easter Sunday. During Lent 2018 we invite you join us in following Jesus through his final week as he journeyed to the cross.

Lent comes from an ancient word meaning “springtime” and it has been a well-worn path walked by Christians for centuries as a way to identify with the sufferings Jesus. Lent is a way to connect with the sorrow of the cross in order to experience the full joy of the resurrection. This season is a time to draw back and evaluate things as we recall and retell the story of Jesus in his suffering, death, and resurrection.

The season of Lent begins on February 14, 2018, Ash Wednesday, and continues for forty days until we reach Easter Sunday on April 1, 2018. We do not count the Sundays during Lent as a part of this forty-day journey because every Sunday marks the resurrection of Jesus.

We encourage you to jump in and join us during this Lenten journey at Word of Life Church. In addition to Sunday morning worship at 10AM we will offer Lenten Midday Prayer at noon in the Upper Room every day during Lent except Sundays.

Life is filled with busyness, work, friends, phones, emails, media, news, bills, and anxiety that pulls us in different directions. The practices of Lent are ways to break away from the things that drain us, so we can be filled with the life of God.

This devotional guide will give you Scriptures, a question, and a prayer for each day in the season of Lent. The practices of worship, Scripture-reading, prayer, and contemplation help us slow down and connect with Jesus.

Yours on the journey,

Pastor Derek

## February 14, Ash Wednesday

**Scripture:** Amos 5:6-15, Hebrews 12:1-14, Luke 18:9-14

**Question:** What am I willing to give up during the season of Lent?

**Prayer:** Almighty and everlasting God, you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## February 15

**Scripture:** Habakkuk 3:1-18, Philippians 3:12-21, John 17:1-8

**Question:** What does perfection as a follower of Jesus look like for me?

**Prayer:** Lord, I long to be closer to you. Please, Lord, remind me that perfection isn't the crazy, successful way I try to live my life, but a perfection of my most authentic, real self. My "perfection" might be holding my many flaws in my open hands, asking you to help me accept them. Heal me, Lord, and help me to find you in the darkness of my life. Let me reach out in this darkness and feel your hand and love there to guide me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## February 16

**Scripture:** Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32, Philippians 4:1-9, John 17:9-19

**Question:** What steps do I need to take to draw closer to God during Lent?

**Prayer:** Lord, I know how much you love me. It's hard for me to feel it sometimes, but I know your love is always with me. Help me to use your love as a way to persevere in this season of Lent. I am weak, but I know with your help, I can use small sacrifices in my life to draw closer to you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## February 17

**Scripture:** Ezekiel 39:21-29, Philippians 4:10-20, John 17:20-26

**Question:** What glaring weakness or character flaw do I need to submit to God?

**Prayer:** Loving creator, I am not asking to overcome my weakness in my own strength, but to submit all of my weaknesses and strengths to you. Let me be aware of the many ways you reach out to help me today and let me stand in awe of the power that you use in such loving ways. In Jesus' name. Amen.



## February 18, The First Sunday in Lent

**Scripture:** Daniel 9:3-10, Hebrews 2:10-18, John 12:44-50

**Question:** What is currently my biggest temptation?

**Prayer:** Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan; Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

## February 19

**Scripture:** Genesis 37:1-11, 1 Corinthians 1:1-19, Mark 1:1-13

**Question:** What hurt from my past have I not dealt with?

**Prayer:** Loving God, you call us back to you with all of our hearts. I feel your call for me deep in my heart and I know you want me back as much as I want to return. Please, Lord, give me the wisdom to know how to return. Make my journey back to you this Lent one of grace, forgiveness and gentle love. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## February 20

**Scripture:** Genesis 37:12-24, 1 Corinthians 1:20-31, Mark 1:14-28

**Question:** How have I been selfish in the last 12 months?

**Prayer:** Father of my soul, Protector of my heart, I know your love for me is limitless beyond imagining. You care for me as a loving parent. Through my smallest Lenten sacrifices, help me to become less selfish and more aware of your ways. Fan the flame of my desire to draw ever closer to you. Guide me to seek your love. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## February 21

**Scripture:** Genesis 37:25-36, 1 Corinthians 2:1-13, Mark 1:29-45

**Question:** What am I most afraid of when I practice self denial?

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, I know you receive what is in my heart. Let me be inspired by your words and by the actions of your son, Jesus. Guide me to make sacrifices this Lent in the spirit of self denial and with greater attention to you and to those around me. Help me to believe that you will grant me this because of the sacrifice Jesus made for us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## February 22

**Scripture:** Genesis 39:1-23, 1 Corinthians 2:14-3:15, Mark 2:1-12

**Question:** Where do I need the most guidance at this moment in my life?

**Prayer:** Lord, I'm not always eager to do your will. I'd often much rather do my own will. Please be with me on this Lenten journey and help me to remember that your own Spirit can guide me in the right direction. I want to "fix" my weaknesses but the task seems overwhelming. But I know that with your help, anything can be done. With a grateful heart, I acknowledge your love and know that without you, I can do nothing. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## February 23

**Scripture:** Genesis 40:1-23, 1 Corinthians 3:16-23, Mark 2:13-22

**Question:** What is it about the suffering and death of Jesus that most captures my attention?

**Prayer:** Creator of my life, renew me and bring me into a new life in you. Heal me and make me feel whole again. Help me to see your love in the passion, death, and resurrection of your Son. Help me to observe Lent in a way that allows me to celebrate that love. Prepare me for these weeks of Lent as I feel both deep sorrow for my sins and your undying love for us all. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## February 24

**Scripture:** Genesis 41:1-13, 1 Corinthians 4:1-7, Mark 2:23-3:6

**Question:** What most closes off my heart to love, joy, and worship?

**Prayer:** Loving God, sometimes my heart turns in every direction except towards you. Please help me to turn my heart toward you, to gaze upon you in trust and to seek your kingdom with all of my heart. Soften my hardened heart so that I might love others as a way to glorify and worship you. Grant me this with the ever-present guidance of your spirit. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## February 25, The Second Sunday in Lent

**Scripture:** Genesis 41:14-45, Romans 6:3-14, John 5:19-24

**Question:** What bad habits or old ways of thinking need to die in my life?

**Prayer:** O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## February 26

**Scripture:** Genesis 41:46-57, 1 Corinthians 4:8-21, Mark 3:7-19

**Question:** How does my pride interfere with what God wants to do in my life?

**Prayer:** Lord, your commandment of love is so simple and so challenging. Help me to let go of my pride. Help me to be humble in my repentance. I want only to live the way you ask me to love, to love the way you ask me to live. I ask this through your son, Jesus, who stands at my side today and always. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## February 27

**Scripture:** Genesis 42:1-17, 1 Corinthians 5:1-8, Mark 3:19-35

**Question:** In what ways have I tried to be my own savior, saving myself by my own actions?

**Prayer:** God in heaven and in my life, guide me and protect me. I so often believe I can save myself and I always end in failure. Lead me with your love away from harm and guide me on the right path. May your Spirit inspire the Church and make us an instrument of your love and guidance. Thank you for your care for me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## February 28

**Scripture:** Genesis 42:18-28, 1 Corinthians 5:9-6:8, Mark 4:1-20

**Question:** Which desires in my heart are still contrary to the ways of Jesus?

**Prayer:** God of Love, through this Lenten journey purify my desires to serve you. Free me from any temptations to judge others, to place myself above others. Please let me surrender even my impatience with others, that with your love and your grace, I might be less and less absorbed with myself and more and more full of the desire to follow you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## March 1

**Scripture:** Genesis 42:29-38, 1 Corinthians 6:12-20, Mark 4:21-34

**Question:** What can I start doing today to walk in the ways of Jesus?

**Prayer:** Loving God, I hear your invitation, "Come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden" and I am filled with such a longing to return to you. Show me the way to return. Lead me this day in the good works I do in your name and send your Spirit to guide me and strengthen my faith. I ask only to feel your love in my life today. In Jesus' name. Amen.



## March 2

**Scripture:** Genesis 43:1-15, 1 Corinthians 7:1-9, Mark 4:35-41

**Question:** What small things can I do today to practice self denial?

**Prayer:** Loving God, I often turn my back on your love. Please accept my small acts of sorrow today and help to release me from the self-absorption that closes my heart to you. As I journey through Lent, let me remember the feast you have prepared for me in the resurrection and let me be filled with thanks to you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## March 3

**Scripture:** Genesis 43:16-34, 1 Corinthians 7:10-24, Mark 5:1-20

**Question:** What gifts from God am I most thankful for today?

**Prayer:** God of infinite love, you shower me with limitless gifts in my life. In my every thought and action today guide me to the bright and loving light of your kingdom. Help me to be aware of the many ways you allow me to share in your life so intimately today. Thank you for the gifts you have placed in my life. Let me be grateful every moment of this day. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## March 4, The Third Sunday in Lent

**Scripture:** Genesis 44:1-17, Romans 8:1-10, John 5:25-29

**Question:** What are some of the emotional adversities and evil thoughts attacking me today?

**Prayer:** Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## March 5

**Scripture:** Genesis 44:18-34, 1 Corinthians 7:25-31, Mark 5:21-43

**Question:** What evil in the world or in my life do I seem to ignore?

**Prayer:** Merciful God, free your Church from the sins of this world and protect us from evil we see and the evil we prefer to ignore. We need your guidance, Lord, for we cannot do this alone. Only with your help can we be saved from this present evil age. Thank you for your desire to save us and love us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## March 6

**Scripture:** Genesis 45:1-15, 1 Corinthians 7:32-40, Mark 6:1-13

**Question:** How can I grow in patience today?

**Prayer:** God of infinite love, I thank you for the constant reminder of your love and your call that we be more patient, gentle and compassionate with others. Here in the middle of Lent, I turn to you to beg for your help. Please soften my heart. Help me to let go of judging others. I ask you this in Jesus' name. Amen.

## March 7

**Scripture:** Genesis 45:16-28, 1 Corinthians 8:1-13, Mark 6:13-29

**Question:** How does it feel to know that I am loved today as a child of God?

**Prayer:** God, you love me as your own child. May I bend my life and will toward you so that I might accept your teaching and guidance. I am so grateful for your support in my life, now and in the age to come. I humbly ask for your help by the Holy Spirit today. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## March 8

**Scripture:** Genesis 46:1-7, 28-34, 1 Corinthians 9:1-15, Mark 6:30-46

**Question:** How open am I today to the surprising work of the Holy Spirit?

**Prayer:** Loving God, I hear your invitation, "Come follow me" and I am filled with such a longing to follow you with my entire life. Show me the way. Lead me this day in the good works I do in your name and send your Spirit to guide me and strengthen my faith. I ask only to feel your love in my life today. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## March 9

**Scripture:** Genesis 47:1-26, 1 Corinthians 9:16-27, Mark 6:47-56

**Question:** How can God's mercy endure in the presence of my constant failures?

**Prayer:** God of Mercy, I feel my heart overflowing with your tenderness. I sense your loving touch deep within my soul. I ask for your help in my weakness that I might be faithful to your ways and I am so grateful that your mercy for my failings is as strong as your unbounded love for me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## March 10

**Scripture:** Genesis 47:27-48:7, 1 Corinthians 10:1-13, Mark 7:1-23

**Question:** Who in my life needs to be the object of my mercy and compassion?

**Prayer:** God of mercy and understanding, I know that with help I can open my heart more fully to the mysteries of the suffering and death of your son. Help me to be humble in this journey and remember that any mercy and compassion I feel is a gift from you. I await the joy of Easter with new longing and patience. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## March 11, The Fourth Sunday in Lent

**Scripture:** Genesis 48:8-22, Romans 8:11-25, John 6:27-40

**Question:** What can I do today to cultivate a real hunger for the things of God?

**Prayer:** Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

## March 12

**Scripture:** Genesis 49:1-28, 1 Corinthians 10:14-11:1, Mark 7:27-37

**Question:** How can I grow in my appreciation and gratitude for the practice of holy communion?

**Prayer:** God who created me, you offer me new life through your Son and the gift of your sacraments. While I see new life all around me, I don't always recognize the new life you offer me. Help me to grow this Lent in an awareness of the gifts you place in my life and in a greater appreciation for your care. Give me the courage to ask for help. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## March 13

**Scripture:** Genesis 49:29-50:14, 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, Mark 8:1-10

**Question:** What can I do today to find joy in the presence of God?

**Prayer:** Triune God, I'm not sure I always feel joy in worship and prayer. I ask you to help me prepare to understand and embrace the mystery of faith in my life. I don't always see the beauty and mystery of this season and often I run from the pain. Help me to see how your saving grace and your loving touch in my life can fill me with joyful praise of the salvation you have sent to me. In Jesus' name. Amen.



## March 14

**Scripture:** Genesis 50:15-26, 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, Mark 8:11-26

**Question:** What in my past causes me to feel the most guilt?

**Prayer:** Loving and merciful God, I am so aware of my sins and weaknesses. But as painfully aware of my faults as I am, let me also remember your tender love, your gentle and limitless forgiveness. I come before you filled with pain and guilt but look into your eyes and see the forgiving love I so long for in my life. Help me to forgive the same way. Teach me to love as you love. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## March 15

**Scripture:** Exodus 1:6-22, 1 Corinthians 12:12-26, Mark 8:27-9:1

**Question:** Where in the sufferings of Jesus do I see quiet and overlooked sacrifice?

**Prayer:** Merciful Father, I know that the tiny sacrifices I make this Lent can never serve to compare to the sacrifices of Christ. But help me make my whole life one of following in his steps. I am filled with your love. Let your love shine out from within me and guide my life in this sacred journey toward the Easter joy you offer me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## March 16

**Scripture:** Exodus 2:1-22, 1 Corinthians 12:27-13:3, Mark 9:2-13

**Question:** What can I find in creation to compare in a small way to the love of God?

**Prayer:** God of forgiveness, I come before you humbled and sad in the face of my own repeated failings. I hold out my hands asking for mercy. It is then that I feel you reach out and take my hand in your loving grasp. Thank you for the love you pour out on me so lavishly. Help me to follow more closely to the path you have set for me, the path of your Son. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## March 17

**Scripture:** Exodus 2:23-3:15, 1 Corinthians 13:1-13, Mark 9:14-29

**Question:** Who can I connect with today to stay close to Jesus?

**Prayer:** Gracious Lord, what you ask of my life seems so right. It is how I want to live, following your Son Jesus so closely. And yet I fail so often to stay on that path. I cannot do it alone. I need your help and guidance. I need to remember your love for me and I want to remember how very much I need you in my life. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## March 18, The Fifth Sunday in Lent

**Scripture:** Exodus 3:16-4:12, Romans 12:1-21, John 8:46-59

**Question:** What desires in my heart need to be changed so I can love what Jesus commands?

**Prayer:** Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

## March 19

**Scripture:** Exodus 4:10-31, 1 Corinthians 14:1-19, Mark 9:30-41

**Question:** How I am preparing myself to be a citizen of Jesus' kingdom?

**Prayer:** God of love, I know you are the source of all that is good in my life. Help me move from the life of sin to which I so often cling into the new life of grace you offer me. You know what I need to prepare for your kingdom. Bless me with those gifts. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## March 20

**Scripture:** Exodus 5:1-6:1, 1 Corinthians 14:20-40, Mark 9:42-50

**Question:** Instead of complaining, what can I thank God for today?

**Prayer:** Loving God, You have heard my complaints and you know my impatience. Guide my heart back to you. Help me think beyond my own wants so I may desire only to do your will. Thank you for the many blessings in my life and for the ways I feel your presence. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## March 21

**Scripture:** Exodus 7:8-24, 2 Corinthians 2:14-3:6, Mark 10:1-16

**Question:** In what ways is the Spirit at work in my life to change and renew my heart?

**Prayer:** Loving Creator, I know in your great love for me you see the deep sorrow in my heart. Hear my prayers which are offered with such trust in you. Be with me in both mind and heart as I renew my life in your Spirit. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## March 22

**Scripture:** Exodus 7:25-8:19, 2 Corinthians 3:7-18, Mark 10:17-31

**Question:** What unhealthy habits do I need to give up today?

**Prayer:** Great Lord and King, all I want is to be faithful to you in my life, but so often I fail. Free me from my many sins and guide me to the life I will share with you. I wait for your promise to be fulfilled with great hope in my heart and your praise on my lips. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## March 23

**Scripture:** Exodus 9:13-35, 2 Corinthians 4:1-12, Mark 10:32-45

**Question:** What excess in my life tends to weigh me down?

**Prayer:** Most forgiving Lord, again and again you welcome me back into your loving arms. Grant me freedom from the heavy burdens of sin that weigh me down and keep me so far from you. Give me strength to run with endurance the race set before me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## March 24

**Scripture:** Exodus 10:21-11:8, 2 Corinthians 4:13-18, Mark 10:46-52

**Question:** When I think back to my baptism, what brings me the most joy?

**Prayer:** Loving God, I am filled with a great happiness when I feel your endless love for me. Thank you for your care for me, one of your children. I ask you to protect from harm those who will soon be your children, welcomed into the joy of your church. Please continue to pour out your blessings on all of us who have come to you through the waters of baptism. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## March 25, Palm Sunday

**Scripture:** Zechariah 9:9-12, 1 Timothy 6:12-16, Luke 19:41-48

**Question:** What about the life of Jesus seems the most difficult to imitate?

**Prayer:** Almighty and everliving God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



## March 26, Monday in Holy Week

**Scripture:** Lamentations 1:1-12, 2 Corinthians 1:1-7, Mark 11:12-25

**Question:** Am I afraid to suffer?

**Prayer:** Almighty God, whose dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## March 27, Tuesday in Holy Week

**Scripture:** Lamentations 1:17-22, 2 Corinthians 1:8-22, Mark 11:27-33

**Question:** What am I willing to give up permanently in order to follow Jesus more faithfully?

**Prayer:** O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life: Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ, that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## **March 28, Wednesday in Holy Week**

**Scripture:** Lamentations 2:1-9, 2 Corinthians 1:23-2:11, Mark 12:1-11

**Question:** How was Jesus able to endure the suffering he experienced?

**Prayer:** Lord God, whose blessed Son our Savior gave his body to be whipped and his face to be spit upon: Give us grace to accept joyfully the sufferings of the present time, confident of the glory that shall be revealed; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## **March 29, Maundy Thursday**

**Scripture:** Lamentations 2:10-18, 1 Corinthians 10:14-17, Mark 14:12-25

**Question:** What do I do to prepare myself to receive holy communion?

**Prayer:** Almighty Father, whose dear Son, on the night before he suffered, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood: Mercifully grant that we may receive it thankfully in remembrance of Jesus Christ our Lord, who in these holy mysteries gives us a pledge of eternal life; and who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## March 30, Good Friday

**Scripture:** Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-33, 1 Peter 1:10-20, John 13:36-42

**Question:** What is the Holy Spirit speaking to me when I think about Jesus on the cross?

**Prayer:** Almighty God, we pray you graciously to behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## March 31, Holy Saturday

**Scripture:** Lamentations 3:37-58, Hebrews 4:1-16, Romans 8:1-11

**Question:** What needs to rise in newness in my life with the Easter season?

**Prayer:** O God, Creator of heaven and earth: Grant that, as the crucified body of your dear Son was laid in the tomb and rested on this holy Sabbath, so we may await with him the coming of the third day, and rise with him to newness of life; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

