



IN HIS  
PRESENCE

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LENT DEVOTIONAL GUIDE



**THE PARK**  
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COMMUNITY CHURCH

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# About Lent

The season of Lent finds its roots in the early 2nd-century church. The Lenten season is 40 days in which the church reflects on the life and death of Jesus. The 40 days of Lent reflect the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert being tempted by Satan (Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13).

As the Park Community Church, we are walking through the Lectionary, reflecting on how the world was changed by the presence of Jesus. Jesus healed people, cast out demons and performed miracles. He also pointed out the sin and the idols in people's lives. He is doing the same even today.

While we walk through this season of Lent, let us be quick to confess our sins and our shortcomings. Let us pray more. Let us read the Word of God more. Let us mourn our brokenness and sinful nature, for which Jesus died on a cross. But let us hold fast to the truth that He has defeated death through his resurrection.

All of Lent points toward Easter Sunday, in which we celebrate Jesus' victory over death. This Lenten journey is one of sacrifice and sober-mindedness, but it is also one of certainty and joy. We worship a God who is victorious.

As we meditate on the things of God, we practice cruciform living in the context of a church that is family. We forgo our own personal comforts to seek the love and edification of the church. In this guide and its online components, you will find devotionals, prayers, practices, challenges, and supplements for your personal time with the Lord.

We pray this season draws us into a closer walk with the Father. We pray that the Spirit moves to grow us in our passion for God, in compassion for others and in our wisdom in everyday decisions. We pray that we can experience the presence of the Son. We pray that the kingdom will come on earth as it is in heaven.

## Follow Along Online

You can find a digital copy of this devotional guide as well as additional resources at: **[theparksa.org/lent](http://theparksa.org/lent)**

# In the presence of the Son of Man, John the Baptist humbles himself.

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*In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."*

*The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.*

*Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."*

*Mark 1:9-15*

At the close of the American Revolutionary War, King George III said that if George Washington lays down his power as the Commander and General and establishes a real Democracy, “he will be the greatest man in the world.” King George was playing off what he knows to be true, deep in the heart of all men and women, they seek recognition and power.

As we read Mark 1:9-15, we should not pass quickly over the moment where Jesus approaches John the Baptist and asks to be Baptized. John was well established as a prophet, he had many followers, and so his response, kneeling down, is against his flesh and against his need to be in power. John kneels down and humbles himself before the Son of Man.

Submission is an invitation to leadership, and it is a significant theme running throughout the scriptures. We see it in David repenting before God for his sins, in the Prophets willingness to give up their reputation to proclaim God’s word, and of course here in John’s actions. The desire to submit yourself to another is born of humility.

When we resist submission, it is out of stubbornness and pride. The New Testament paints a beautiful picture of a church where each member is submitted to the other under the headship of Christ. The question we ask as a follower of Jesus is not what is my way, or my opinion, but we submit ourselves to the father and discern together, what is His desire?

## Discussion

- ❓ How have you seen someone be like John the Baptist, preparing the way for Jesus' ministry?
- ❓ How have you been like the Pharisees, pretending to do the work of God but really commanding attention to yourself?
- ❓ What does this passage teach you about God?  
What does it teach you about yourself?
- ❓ How can your Missional Community prepare the way for the work and ministry of Jesus?

## Prayer

God of grace and glory,  
you call us with your voice of flame  
to be your people, faithful and courageous.  
As your beloved Son  
embraced his mission in the waters of baptism,  
inspire us with the fire of your Spirit  
to join in his transforming work.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

## Praxis

- ✚ Spend some time this week praying for God to soften your heart towards his work in your life this Lenten season. Write ways in which you want to grow in your relationship with God during Lent in your journal.
- ✚ Wake up an hour earlier than you normally do every day this week. Spend that hour praying and meditating on Scripture, preparing the way for the work of Jesus in your day.
- ✚ Is there a way you could serve the least of these in our church or in our city? How can you invite accountability in as you humble yourself in service to others?
- ✚ Lectionary readings for this week: Genesis 9:8-17, Psalm 25:1-10, 1 Peter 3:18-22

## Going Deeper

Often, we sin against others and against God because of an inability to or an unwillingness to humble ourselves. In his book, *Enemies of the Heart*, Andy Stanley takes a look at how this destructive force can make its way into our lives and how the gospel of Jesus Christ can free us from it.

To learn more about this book, visit our website:

**[theparksa.org/lent](http://theparksa.org/lent)**

# In the presence of the Son of Man, the rich young ruler chooses incorrectly.

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*And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'" And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth." And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.*

*And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God."*

The story of the rich young ruler leaves me feeling sad because I know people like him, and if I'm being honest, I have his heart a lot of the time. The wealthy man had it all, yet he wondered how to inherit eternal life. There is something wrong with his approach. He desired to do something to inherit this life eternal, but that isn't how an inheritance works. An inheritance is given. Receiving that gift requires a humbling of our hearts in order to receive Christ's gift of eternal salvation.

An encouraging story of the opposite response to this specific call of Christ is that of James Barnett. James was born into a Christian home, graduated from college and started a job making six-figures. Sounds like the dream, right? Not to James; he felt like something was missing.

The turning point for James was a mission trip to Nicaragua where he encountered the world's "least of these" and shared the gospel with them. When James came back to the States, he felt God call him to sell everything and to care for the poor and needy. So he did. He has devoted his life to caring for those who most people ignore or look down upon.

Just like James, the rich, young ruler had a choice: submit to Christ as Lord and sell everything to follow Him, or to continue his lifestyle. Coming to the conclusion that surrendering would cost him too much, the ruler chose his worldly wealth and comfort over the cruciform lifestyle. While this may seem extreme, this begs the question of us: What would we do in that situation?

## ? Discussion

- ? What is God calling you to surrender in order to follow Him?
- ? Have you counted the cost of following Jesus? Have you determined the cost is too great to follow Jesus wholly, or do you have a surrendered, opened handed posture?
- ? Is there something getting in the way of following Jesus, loving your neighbor, and proclaiming the truth of who God is? Is there something missing in your life that would enable you to do those things?
- ? Have you seen any examples of others living sacrificially? How has this impacted your life?

## † Prayer

God of all power,  
you call us to forsake all else to follow you.  
Fill us with a desire to see your kingdom come  
that surpasses any promise wealth can make,  
that exceeds anything else we idolize,  
that your glory might reach the ends of the earth  
in Jesus' name. *Amen.*

## Praxis

- ④ This week, fast one day from sun up to sun down. As you abstain from eating, replace your meals with prayer. Ask God what comforts you place ahead of faithfulness.
- ④ Surrender your comforts this week and start up a conversation with someone you never talk to. This could be a coworker, a neighbor, your barista, the checker at the grocery store. As you talk to them, pray for God's presence in your conversation.
- ④ This week, practice Lectio Divina on Ecclesiastes 3. Read the passage through. Read it again slowly and meditate on a word that stands out to you. Then read it again and reflect on why that word would stand out to you. Then pray on whatever God reveals to you.
- ④ Lectionary readings for this week: Genesis 17:1-16, Psalm 22:23-31, Romans 4:13-25, Mark 8:31-38

## Going Deeper

Following Jesus requires obedience to give up our own comforts to follow Jesus. John Cortines and Gregory Baumer are two Harvard Business School graduates who were experiencing great success and wealth until God told them to give the majority of their money away to those in need. Their book, *God and Money*, is a practical guide filled with case studies and research that offers an honest look at what the Bible says about generous giving.

To learn more about *God and Money* by John Cortines and Gregory Baumer, go to our website:

**[theparksa.org/lent](http://theparksa.org/lent)**

# In the presence of the Son of Man, the high priest is rebuked.

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*The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."*

*So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.*

*John 2:13-22*

The word zeal means to have great energy or enthusiasm in pursuit of a cause or an objective. You can always tell what a person loves by how much energy, passion, and focus they give towards something. The opposite is in most cases also true; we can see what truly doesn't matter to someone by the lack of passion they show. It becomes especially sad when our zeal gets misapplied to the wrong things and we grow numb to this fact. There is nothing more frustrating than spending all your time and energy on the wrong thing!

In John 2, we see Jesus enter the temple and drive out the money changers. He makes a whip and turns over tables. Zeal for the house of his Father consumed him which harkened back to Psalm 69:9. This is an action of Jesus unlike most others of his ministry. The Jews had turned the temple into an open-air market by selling items and animals for use in the temple. It was never meant to be this way. They were taking all their time and energy and putting it toward the wrong thing.

Jesus' objective that day with the Jews was to bring them back to their calling as a missional people. It was very much an indictment of the Jewish leaders who had allowed this to happen. In a deep sense, this is Jesus calling the priesthood to account for the mismanagement of the worship of God in the temple. Leadership is temporary and we are all accountable.

## Discussion

- ② What does zeal for God in the church look like today?
- ② What has God given you to lead and in what ways is He calling you to that leadership?
- ② Who can you be accountable to in the things God has you stewarding in His kingdom?
- ② Have you seen your missional community encourage you in your missional calling? Has anyone ever called you out for not living into your missional calling?

## Prayer

Holy One, creator of the stars and seas,  
your steadfast love is shown to every living thing;  
your word calls forth countless worlds and souls;  
your law revives and refreshes.  
Forgive our misuse of your gifts,  
that we may be transformed by your wisdom  
to manifest for others  
the mercy of our crucified and risen Lord. *Amen*

## Praxis

- ④ Have you sinned against someone by using your power or position over them? Apologize to them and ask for their forgiveness.
- ④ Pray for the health of all the churches that profess the gospel all around the world.
- ④ Take some time to fast this week without telling anyone about it. Reclaim your personal time with the Lord as private and intimate.
- ④ Is there someone you know who has been hurt by unrighteous behavior in the church? How can you reach out to them and minister to them? How can you apologize to them on behalf of the church?

Lectinary readings for this week: Exodus 20:1-7, Psalm 19, 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, John 2:13-22

## Going Deeper

Sometimes, we get ahead of ourselves when we start to do work, even the work of God. Tim Keller writes in his book, *Every Good Endeavor*, to encourage us to find ways to connect our work to the work God is already doing in our world.

To learn more about this book and where to get it, visit our website:

**[theparksa.org/lent](http://theparksa.org/lent)**

# In the presence of the Son of Man, Nicodemus questions.

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*Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."*

*Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life."*

The tales and accounts of Jesus must have made their way back to Nicodemus. He is interested, curious. Maybe he chooses to visit Jesus at night because he was too busy during the day. Perhaps he didn't want people to see. In the darkness, he makes his way to where Jesus was and says (in my words), "You're doing miracles and such, so maybe you're sent by God like you say. Maybe even God is with you." That is the truth, as far as Nicodemus can see.

Jesus responds, "Yes, and no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and Spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'"

Nicodemus was born of a pure Jewish lineage. His heritage was, no doubt, part of his importance. How could he be born again? How is this not good enough for God?

Jesus responds, "I've told you earthly things and you don't understand them. How could you ever comprehend heavenly things?" Jesus doesn't leave the conversation there. He tells Nicodemus of God's love for the world and the plan for redemption. After doing so, he and the disciples leave.

We meet Nicodemus again in John 7. He hasn't left the Pharisees; he's still a powerful figure in their circles. But when Jesus is crucified and buried, Nicodemus brings spices and oils to embalm Jesus' body. It is thought that he spent quite a bit of money to give Jesus a royal burial.

Nicodemus' story ends in ambiguity. He acknowledges that Jesus is important, maybe even God-adjacent. He knows his teachings, but does he understand? He has seen his works, but does he believe?

I think many of us spend a lot of our life here in the wondering and the ambiguity. We know Jesus is God, but is he our God? How would Nicodemus' story end if he heard and believed? How would ours?

## ? Discussion

- ? Can you relate to Nicodemus? Are there parts of your spiritual life that you keep in the darkness?
- ? What does it mean to you to be born again? Recount that story to your missional community.
- ? Jesus could have scolded Nicodemus for not understanding. Instead, he speaks tenderly and shares his plan for redemption. When has God spoken tenderly to you in the face of uncertainty or doubt?
- ? For Nicodemus, his stature came from his lineage and his job. Where do you find yourself seeking your own importance?

## † Prayer

Steadfast God,  
you reach out to us in mercy  
even when we rebel against your holy call  
and prefer to walk in disobedience  
rather than in the way of your divine truth.  
soften our hearts with the warmth of your love,  
that we may know your Son alive within us,  
redeeming us and raising us up into  
your eternal presence. *Amen.*

## Praxis

- ④ This week, forsake the things you think give you importance. Maybe that's your appearance; limit your wardrobe to two outfits. Maybe it's work; unplug from work when you get home at night.
- ④ This week, practice Lectio Divina on John 3:10-21. Read the passage through. Read it again slowly and meditate on a word that stands out to you. Then read it again and reflect on why that word would stand out to you. Then pray on whatever God reveals to you.
- ④ Is there some theological question you have? Look into taking a class like Veritas or auditing a class at Oblate School of Theology. Find a practical way to turn your questions into a wondrous faith.

Lectionary readings for this week: Numbers 21:4-9, Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22, Ephesians 2:1-10, John 3:14-21.

## Going Deeper

In this story, Nicodemus has doubts and questions, none of which are uncommon to us. However, in his story, he never moves past that stage.

In his book, *The Curious Christian*, Barnabas Piper looks at doubt and questions as an opportunity for God to be magnified in our lives. Subtitled “How Wonder Enriches Every Part of Life,” Barnabas Piper challenges us to move out of our questions and into adoration of a wondrous God.

For a link to learn more about this book and to order it, visit our website:

**[theparksa.org/lent](http://theparksa.org/lent)**

# In the presence of the Son of Man, Satan is driven out.

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*Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.*

*"Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.*

*John 12:20-33*

John 12:20-33 is an interesting passage with a lot going on. The Father speaks from heaven. Jesus predicts the kind of death He would die. Jesus declares that the world will be judged and its ruler, Satan, will be cast out. As believers in Jesus, this supernatural understanding of power and coercion is vital. Jesus' authority over Satan is what allows for us to experience freedom and extend that offer to others. This victory holds true both in the here and now, and in the future for eternity.

Jesus addresses Satan in a way that shows he is real, but we should fear not for He has overcome and we are not enslaved to evil or sin any longer. 1 Peter 5:8-9 addresses how we are to deal with encounters with Satan, "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in your faith." The way to resist Satan is by standing firm in our faith in a community. Peter uses this predatory language to make us think about how animals respond to lions; they stick together and watch out for one another. This is the type of alertness and attentiveness we should be paying to the evil that is around us seeking to divide and destroy the body of Christ. Isn't it comforting to know that we have a God and a community that is looking out for us and has our best interests at heart?

Practically speaking, Christ's authority over Satan means that followers of Jesus are free from the snares of sin and eternal separation from God. While this freedom may not always be immediate, our sanctification is a process that is to be lived out in community. John 12:20-33 is an interesting passage with a lot going on. The Father speaks from heaven, Jesus predicts the kind of death He would die, and He says the world will be judged and its ruler (Satan) will be cast out. As believers in Jesus, this supernatural understanding of power and coercion is vital. Jesus' authority over Satan is what allows for us to experience freedom and extend that offer to others. This victory holds true both in the here and now, and in the future for eternity.

## Discussion

- ② How have you seen Christ's freedom evidenced in your own life?
- ② What are some areas in which Satan seeks to ensnare you? How are you seeking community to help protect you and hold you accountable?
- ② How have you been able to encourage someone in their own sanctification?
- ② How does Christ's victory over Satan, sin and the grave impact the way you engage with your family? With your church community? With your neighbors and co-workers?

## Prayer

God of compassion,  
you know our faults and yet you promised to forgive.  
Keep us in your presence and give us your wisdom.  
Open our hearts to gladness,  
call dry bones to dance,  
and restore to us the joy of your salvation. *Amen.*



## Praxis

- ④ This week, rid yourself of distractions. Fast from social media to free up space for God to work and give you clarity.
- ④ Is there someone you know who you can encourage this week? Write them a note, ask them to meet up and pray with them.
- ④ Write out ways in which you feel Satan working against you. Write out a prayer and ask the Lord to fight on your behalf.
- ④ Practice Lectio Divina on 1 Peter 5:8-9. Read the passage through. Read it again slowly and meditate on a word that stands out to you. Then read it again and reflect on why that word would stand out to you. Then pray on whatever God reveals to you.

Lectionary readings for this week: Jeremiah 31:31-34, Psalm 51:1-12, Hebrews 5:5-10, John 12:20-33.



## Going Deeper

In his article, “*The Fall of Satan and the Victory of Christ*,” John Piper writes to encourage us in God’s victory over Satan. Assuredly, he writes “In the end, Satan serves to magnify the power, wisdom, love, grace, mercy, patience and wrath of Jesus Christ.”

To read this article, go to our website:

**[www.theparksa.org/lent](http://www.theparksa.org/lent)**

# In the presence of the Son of Man, Mary anoints Jesus.

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*Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."*

*John 12:1-19*

The contrast between Mary and Judas could not be any bolder. Mary extravagantly pours out her love on Jesus. When she uses the expensive pure nard to anoint Jesus' feet with her hair, she is showing him a love that cannot be measured. The house is filled with the fragrance. I imagine John writing this passage having been in the room, remembering the strong and wonderful smell, remembering how shocked and amazed that they all were. Judas values this perfume at three hundred denarii. This would have been around the equivalent of a full years wages for a worker, or somewhere close to \$27,000. In a practical sense, I can't argue with Judas. The poor could have been fed a lot of food with the money from the perfume. Instead, Jesus praises her act of love, a love that expresses the immense worth that Jesus is to her. To Mary Jesus is worth all that she can give.

On the other hand, we know the story of Judas. John is clear to point out to us when mentioning Judas that he is the one who will betray Jesus. Judas doesn't really care for the poor, he only cares about getting some of the money for himself. We know that in Judas' story, he also places a value on the person of Jesus. When he betrays Jesus, he receives a payment of 30 pieces of silver. Now scholars are a little mixed on exactly which silver piece this would have been, but they do know that it was eventually used to buy a field. In Exodus 30 pieces of silver was the price of purchasing a slave. The average estimate value of these coins would have been around \$9000.

These monetary values show the contrast in what Jesus was worth to Mary and to Judas. To Mary, Jesus was worth her whole life savings. To Judas he was only worth the price of a slave. Mary extravagantly loved Jesus with all she had, while Judas responds to Jesus with an act of greed and hate.

## ? Discussion

- ? Do you find yourself agreeing with Judas? That is a lot of money that could have been used to truly help people. This story is meant to be a bit disturbing. Discuss your feelings on the waste.
- ? Do you identify with the love that Mary poured out on Jesus? In what ways can you recklessly and selflessly show your love for Him?
- ? Money is always a touchy subject, especially when it comes to church. Do you feel like the money spent on Jesus is a waste sometimes? How do we balance extravagantly loving Jesus with our money while being responsible to our family and to the poor and unfortunate?

## † Prayer

God of suffering and glory,  
in Jesus Christ you reveal the way of life  
through the path of obedience.  
Inscribe your law in our hearts,  
that in life we may not stray from you,  
but may be your people. *Amen.*

## Praxis

- ④ Find a way to selflessly and extravagantly pour your love out on Jesus this week.
- ④ Refrain from using your money selfishly this week.
- ④ Find a way to show love to someone less fortunate you are this week.
- ④ Lectionary readings for this week: Isaiah 50:4-9a, Psalm 31:9-16, Philippians 2:5-11, Mark 14:1-15:47.

## Going Deeper

Read: *Practicing the Way of Jesus: Life Together in the Kingdom of Love* by Mark Scandrette

Watch: a video of Mark Discussing how he began to work towards actually practicing the way of Jesus. {[theparksa.org/wayofjesus](http://theparksa.org/wayofjesus)}

Read: *Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical* by Shane Claiborne

To learn more about this book and for other resources, visit our website:

**[theparksa.org/lent](http://theparksa.org/lent)**

# In the presence of the Son of Man, Mary Magdalene proclaims the Good News.

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*Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb.*

*Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed*

*John 20:1-8*

When I first came to believe in the resurrection, the overpowering nature of the event caused me to want to tell everyone. I was quite aware that many would not respond the way I did, but the power of the message overpowered the fear of rejection.

I'm reminded of this when I consider Mary's response to finding the empty tomb. She runs to tell the others. Although the text makes no mention of what is going on inside of her while she runs, I wonder if she thought about how the message would come across.

Would they think she was out of her mind?

Peter and John run to the tomb and it is not until John walks into the empty tomb that he "saw and believed."

Fearing the rejection of our message is human. We want to be liked and accepted. The only thing that can overpower this fear is the power of the resurrection inside of us. When we come to the full realization that we are walking now in the kingdom of God, in complete union with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, this message can overpower anything else.

Let us pray to God for a fresh insight into what has truly happened in the world and in us, and let us pray for the power to tell others to come and see. The message of the resurrection is too large to be contained.

## Discussion

- ② What is your experience with evangelism? Was it as urgent and as exciting as Mary Magdalene at the tomb?
- ② Are there people you know who need to hear this good news?
- ② As we leave the season of Lent and enter a season of rejoicing in the resurrection, what have you learned this season? How has God turned your mourning into joy?
- ② Mary Magdalene tells the disciples the good news. They, in turn, start their ministries, sharing this good news with everyone. Why do you think God chose to reveal this first to Mary Magdalene?

## Prayer

Love divine,  
in raising Christ to new life  
you opened the path of salvation to all peoples.  
Send us out, with the joy of Mary Magdalene,  
to proclaim that we have seen the Lord,  
so that all the world may celebrate with you  
the banquet of your peace. *Amen.*

## Praxis

- ④ Carve out time this week to reflect on what God has taught you during Lent. Pray and journal through this.
- ④ Are there people you know who don't yet know Jesus? Write their names out in your journal and pray for them everyday this week.
- ④ Practice Lectio Divina on 2 Corinthians 5:11-21. Read the passage through. Read it again slowly and meditate on a word that stands out to you. Then read it again and reflect on why that word would stand out to you. Then pray on whatever God reveals to you.
- ④ Lectionary readings for this week: Isaiah 42:1-9, Psalm 36:5-11, Hebrews 9:11-15, John 12:1-11.

## Going Deeper

Mary Magdalene runs and tells the disciples the good news. The disciples and the apostles take the gospel throughout the Middle East and into Europe. From there, the church starts to spread around the world. In his book, *The Church as Movement*, Dan White, Jr. gives practical advice for missional living like Mary and the apostles.

To learn more about this book and for other resources, visit our website:

**[theparksa.org/lent](http://theparksa.org/lent)**

## Going Deeper

### The Lectionary

This sermon series, we will follow along with the lectionary passages. The lectionary we follow is from the Vanderbilt Divinity Library. According to their website, their daily readings expand the range of biblical reading in worship and personal devotion by providing daily citations for the full three-year cycle of the Revised Common Lectionary. These weekly readings complement the Sunday readings.

The lectionary can be accessed from our website or by searching “Lectionary Year B by Vanderbilt Divinity Library.”

### Text Week

Another online resource for navigating through the lectionary is available at [textweek.com](http://textweek.com). They compile examples of art, commentaries, articles, books and other reference material for your use from a variety of different Christian traditions. It is a wonderful aggregate of knowledge, insight and experiences.

### Spotify Playlist

Our worship team members have curated a playlist for the season of Lent. It includes songs for reflection as well as the songs we will be singing in both parishes during this season.

Find a link on **[theparksa.org/lent](http://theparksa.org/lent)**

## Resources by Week

Below are some supplemental resources and illustrations of the content, week to week. We hope these are helpful to you and your Missional Communities as you navigate the waters of discipleship together.

Week 1 // Mark 1:9-15

*Enemies of the Heart*, Andy Stanley

Week 2 // Mark 10:17-27

*God and Money*, John Cortines and Gregory Baumer

Week 3 // John 2:13-22

*Every Good Endeavor*, Timothy Keller

Week 4 // John 3:1-21

*The Curious Christian*, Barnabas Piper

Week 5 // John 12:20-33

“The Fall of Satan and the Victory of Christ,” John Piper

Week 6 // John 12:1-19

*Practicing the Way of Jesus*, Mark Scandrette.

Video of Mark Discussing how he began to work towards actually practicing the way of Jesus. {[theparksa.org/wayofjesus](http://theparksa.org/wayofjesus)}.

*Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical* by Shane Claiborne.

Week 7 // John 20:1-8

*The Church as Movement*, Dan White, Jr.



## **Ash Wednesday Morning**

708 West Summit | February 14 | 7-8am

Ash Wednesday traditionally marks the beginning of the Lenten season. From the ashes of the previous year's palm Sunday branches, Christians over the centuries have been marked with a cross on their foreheads. As we receive this mark, we hear the words spoken over us, "you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Gen 3:19). In this act, we are reminded of the frailty and mortality of our bodies; that our days are numbered in this world (Ps 90:12). This body that God has given us, through which our spirit experiences Him, through which we share His love with those around us, came from the earth, and will return to it one day. It is in this place of humility, we move toward him again, and open up space for His love to transform us.

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## **Friday Morning Prayer**

708 West Summit | Fridays During Lent | 7-8am

We are committing to pray together on Friday mornings during Lent. During this season we are gathering together to ask read the lectionary scripture together and to allow God to speak to us through his word. We will then pray through the ACTS model of prayer (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication). Coffee and tacos are provided.

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## **Good Friday Tenebrae Service**

Alamo Heights Baptist Church | Good Friday | 12pm service

'Tenebrae' means darkness or shadows. As we come to the end of Lent, we begin a journey into darkness to a place of deep shadows. This service is a somber service where we read scripture from the last week of Jesus' life and sing together. We enter into the depth of sadness and darkness that would have been felt after Jesus died on the cross, before Easter Sunday. This service is a preparation to celebrate Easter Sunday morning. We will have prayer stations available for an hour before (11:00am) until an hour after the service is over (2:00pm).

