

# Journey to Easter



DailyLife  
Five Oaks Church

Week 3: February 27–March 4, 2016

# *Day 1*

*February 29*



ORAL AND MUSICAL traditions can convey soul-touching reminders.

The book of Psalms (regardless of whether you consider them prayers, meditations, musical stories, or history) helped the Israelites through such reminders. The Psalms can help you to do exactly the same thing. They have the power to cause you to reflect on yourself, your world, and most importantly, the God who made it all. If Lent is a time of preparation for Easter, then the psalm below is a perfect tool to use in your preparations.

Follow along as the psalmist draws you into a complex word picture. First presented is an acknowledgement that God is my God and that I need to seek him. What follows are reflections upon having seen God previously (in his sanctuary, in his power) as well as the psalmist's personal responses to those interactions. There is also a summary of remembrances. It comes full circle in that we need God and an acknowledgement that only God can sustain us.



*Read / Psalm 63:1–8*



*Reflect / Read and reflect on the following.*

Which component is vital for your understanding of the Easter story more personally and deeply: Realizing a need for God and experiencing and remembering God in his power and glory, or depending on God?

# *Day 2*

*March 1*



## ARE YOU WILLING?

Jesus came and died for you, and he was 100 percent committed to following his Father's will, with nothing else that he had to go and finish first. It is only through Christ's unwavering commitment that a path back to a relationship with God has been provided for you, but only if you are willing to follow him.

As you read today's passage, pay attention to the responses Jesus gave to, and was given by, those supposedly "willing to follow him."



*Read / Luke 9:57–62*



*Reflect* | Read and reflect on the following.

As you consider whether you are seeking to follow Jesus wholeheartedly, where is your commitment level to following Jesus right at this moment?

# Day 3

March 2



MAYBE, JUST MAYBE, knowing something is the very reason we are so often unable to “really” know it.

There is a quote, origin unsure, about “Wherever I go, there I am.” In some ways that is indeed the very problem in itself. Because each of us brings our knowledge, experience, and supposed understanding with us, we are sometimes blinded by those very things to what we are supposed to be seeing—instead thinking that we already know it. If we already “know” a certain Bible story, do we read it with the same depth that we would if it was one we were unfamiliar with?

The passage you will read below was covered in a previous daily life lesson—perhaps you looked at it in a new light as a result. Perhaps you will see it in yet another new light.



*Read / Luke 10:25–37*



*Reflect* / Read and reflect on the following.

N.T. Wright, in his book *Lent for Everyone*, puts it so well when he writes,

So, all of a sudden, I have to think again about who God's kingdom is really for. Is Jesus saying that God's kingdom has all sorts of people in it I never expected? That, certainly, is what the first Christians discovered very soon.

The question, now as then, is whether we will use all that Jesus is telling us here about love and grace as a call to extend that love and grace to the whole world. No church, no Christian can remain content with living life in a way that allows us to watch most of the world lying half-dead in the road and pass by.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the statement above has helped you gain new insight into this parable, even different from what you read last time. How does this impact what you will do to “extend grace and love to the whole world”?

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1. N. T. Wright, *Lent for Everyone: Luke, Year C* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 47.

# Day 4

March 3



IF GOD HAD bookshelves upon which the true accounts of all things are kept, then there would be some very interesting titles there, like *Prayer: Thousands of Years of Improper Use and Practice*.

As you read the passage below, you'll notice the motivation behind the disciples' asking to be taught to pray is not clearly spelled out in this passage. Is it an equality thing? John taught his disciples, after all. Is it a sheepish "I've watched, and it's not as easy as it looks, so please show me" request? Whatever the true motivation, it was meant to be instructional, both then and now.



*Read | Luke 11:1–8*





*Reflect / Read and reflect on the following.*

A master woodcarver takes a block of wood and roughs it into shape, sands it smooth, and then adds fine details and a finish that literally lives. Now, you could know that process and never come close to achieving the same results—unless you knew how many pieces of wood he discarded before choosing the one that felt right and why. You’d also need to know which blades and chisels to use, how to sand only with the grain, and so on, not to mention putting in the years of practice required to become proficient at it.

The same things can be said of praying. Yes, we need to know how to pray. Yes, we should be disciplined about our praying. Yes, we need to remember who we are praying to and why. God wants you praying the long game, and he wants you to be annoyingly persistent in your requests. How do you want to refocus how you should pray in light of reflecting on these verses about prayer?

# Day 5

March 4



CHANGE YOUR FOCUS, change your life.

This phrase could be in books, speeches, on T-shirts, diet supplements, or motivational posters.

In the photography world, awesome things have happened in regard to focus over time and with innovation. With film cameras, you had to wait until your photos were developed to see whether the photo you had taken was even in focus. Then you had to choose to get rid of those that were not at a great cost. Polaroids allowed us to see the pictures right away, while digital cameras brought instant feedback and an almost guiltless ability to delete, at a much smaller cost, photos that were out of focus. If that were not amazing enough, now the newest cameras based on Lytro technology actually allow you to change the focus multiple times—and all this after the photo already has been taken.

As amazing as all this is, it is far better instead to look at what Jesus has to say about changing our focus.



*Read* | *Luke 12:22–32*



*Reflect / Read and reflect on the following.*

Changing your focus to seek God's kingdom first is not always about massive change, but oftentimes a series of fine-tuning adjustments. God's subtle reminders are always around you and can be especially visible in his created world of nature.

What are the things that bring you an awareness and comfort that God is in control?

Next time it's subzero outside and you forgot to allow time to scrape the hoar frost off your car, instead of getting angry, take a moment and look at the actual intricacies of the frost patterns. While you are scraping the windows off, pray and thank God for the cold, crisp, life-sustaining air filling your lungs, and be sure to thank him that even crystals of frost have an intelligently designed beauty of their own. Relax, God has the details all worked out already. Seek first his kingdom.

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