

Lent Devotionals

March 5 - 11



Day 4 – Read Luke 2:21-52

Luke 2:37-38 gives us a glimpse of what it looks like to encounter Christ. Anna is a prophet whose faith story led her to remain in the temple daily worshipping God with fasting and prayer. She eagerly anticipated meeting the Redeemer and at the moment of this meeting, "began to praise God and to speak about Jesus to everyone who was looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem."

During the 6-weeks leading up to Easter, Christians who observe Lent spend time in self-examination and repentance in preparation for an encounter with Jesus. To focus on their relationship with God, some choose to give something up, fasting from food or distracting activities like television or social media. Others may choose to increase a spiritual discipline, such as Bible study or prayer. The purpose of this sacrifice and discipline is to reorient one's life back to God.

As a young person, Lent was confusing. From what I observed in those around me, this 6-week season was either nearly ignored (jumping straight to Jesus' death and resurrection), observed in the strictest sense (affecting diet and daily ritual), or treated as a catalyst for healthy habits (giving up caffeine or chocolate). I'm so thankful for the faith community that God graciously brought into my life to give meaning and understanding to this season.

1) If you have not already done so, prayerfully consider how God might be calling you to participate in Lent. How will you accomplish this discipline or sacrifice? Be specific.

2) What will this season mean in your personal relationship with Jesus? What might your encounter with the Savior produce in your life?

3) If you made a commitment for this season, tell someone.

-Amanda Rue

Day 5 – Read Luke 3

As I was reading Luke 3, the title for the chapter is "John the Baptist Prepares the Way." The thought that kept popping into my head was something along the lines of "If John prepared the way for Jesus, who are we preparing the way for?"

As Christians, we are told that no one knows when Christ will return. "You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him." (Luke 14:39-40) "For you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night." (1 Thessalonians 5:2) Besides these references, there are others throughout the Bible that we can probably all quote.

Since we do not know when Jesus will return, we must always be prepared. This passage reminds me that just as John the Baptist prepared the way for Christ the first time, we as Christians should be preparing the way for His return. Just as John tells the people of Israel in chapter 3, we must share with those who are less fortunate (Luke 3:11). We must also "be content" with our pay, just as John told the soldiers in verse 14. In this way, we can prepare the way for the Second Coming of the Messiah. These are things we can do now, even though we do not know when Christ is coming again.

Luke 3 also states that "His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Luke 3:17) If we follow John's instructions to the people of Israel, we will be counted among the wheat and not burned with the chaff when Christ returns to judge all of humanity.

- Breanna Brothers

Day 6 – Read Luke 4: 1-13

How are those New Year’s resolutions going? Did you promise to eat better, exercise more, spend more time with your family, or read your Bible more? By this time of year, most of us have given up on one or more of our goals for the year. Why is that? Sometimes it’s because we got caught up in all the New Year excitement and set a goal that’s not attainable.

Last year, I wanted to run a 5K in under 20 minutes, a time I attained over 10 years ago. No matter how hard I train, my body just won’t go that fast anymore. Or the goal we set becomes meaningless to us. I wanted to learn to pick locks one year, but after a few months realized that I don’t plan to break into any place and had no reason for this skill.

Many times, though, we abandon our goals because we are tempted to not follow through. We want to eat better, but those treats look too good. We want to exercise more, but sleeping in feels better. We want to spend more time with family, but if we work longer we’ll make more money. We want to read our Bible more, but life gets in the way. Rest assured, you are not alone. Even Jesus was tempted. How did He battle through the temptations? He turned to God’s Word. He didn’t open his Bible and find a particular passage. He had it memorized. Granted, being the Word helped Jesus, but the lesson He showed us is still relevant. Read, study, memorize His word and use it the next time you’re feel those temptations coming. *-Jeremy Skoglund*

Day 7 - Read Luke 4:14-44

The message of overwhelming rejection comes to mind when I read Luke 4:13-44. Jesus’ ministry just started. He had passed the 40-day test in the desert. He had some good first sermons in Galilee where people praised him. Then he went to his hometown where he should have received accolades and encouragement, but instead of support, Jesus’ hometown tried to kill him (v. 28-29). This rejection did not detour Jesus, for he continued preaching. Not only did he continue on, Jesus did it in such a way that Luke remarks that ‘the people were amazed by his teaching because he delivered his message with authority.’ (v. 31-32).

Jesus amazes me. I find myself shrinking back when someone gives me a strange look while I am sharing my faith. When I get full on rejection, I just want to run and hide. Jesus, on the other hand receives the greatest rejection one could receive (AKA ‘we want to kill you’), and he just walks down the road and courageously continues to give the message on his heart. He speaks in a way that amazes people because he delivers it with authority.

So I ask, “Why go through all this hassle?” The very people you are trying to reach again and again reject you and want to destroy you. But Jesus answers this “Why” question in verse 43 “I must preach the good news of God’s kingdom... for this is why I was sent.” Next time you feel rejected know Jesus experienced it too, especially from those who should have loved and encouraged him. His purpose was much higher, and rejection thankfully did not stop him. Don’t let rejection stop you from your true purpose. *-Jen Einrem*

Day 8 – Read Luke 5

One Day Jesus encountered a man with a terrible skin disease. When the man saw Jesus he fell on his face and begged Jesus to heal him. Jesus immediately healed the man. Then Jesus instructed the man not to tell anyone how he had been healed. Jesus told the man to show himself to a priest to make an offering for his cleansing. Evidently the man did not obey Jesus’ instruction, because huge crowds came to listen to Jesus and to be healed of their diseases.

- 1) Why did Jesus instruct the man not to tell anyone that he had been healed by Jesus?
- 2) Do you think that Jesus knew that the man would be more likely to tell of his healing if he was told not to then if Jesus had told him to tell everyone how he had been healed?
- 3) There are many miracles of healing in the book of Luke. Do you think that these healings resulted in life-long, faithful believers? If so, why aren’t there more miracles today?

- Jim Karn