

journey through lent



A lenten devotional

February 25-April 12, 2009
Church of the Redeemer
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Rev. Karen Burtner Graham, Pastor

The Fourth Ten Days of Lent

Dear Church Family,

Come and be a part of a 40 day plus Lenten journey. I remember the Sunday that Kari Sharpe preached from the text in Matthew 22; she spoke of those invited to the wedding banquet that did not respond to the first or second invitation, so an invitation was extended to others. An invitation has been extended to the Redeemer family and some were not able to respond, therefore you will find random devotions shared from outside our Redeemer family.

Blessings to you as we take a "*Lenten Journey*" for the next 40 days, plus Sundays, that will be shared every ten days.

Wednesday, April 1, 2009 – day 31

The Lost Sheep

Someone once wrote that “Sin is anything that comes between a person and God, or between a person and other persons, causing a separation. In other words, sin is whatever cuts us off from love.” I experienced this when I was 13. For years I had looked forward to growing up, but when my body and emotions suddenly began to change, I found myself wishing I could turn back the clock. I began to day dream in school. At home I repeatedly played a recording of “Peter Pan,” singing along with Mary Martin and imagining I was with Peter and the lost boys in Never-never-land. A place where no one grew up. A place where Peter and I would never fall in and out of love. No divorce, no broken hearts ever.

For weeks I slept fitfully until one night I awoke to hear God’s voice calling me. God had spoken to me before, but this time I couldn’t make sense of what He was saying. “Kathy, Kathy, where are you, Kathy?” He repeated this question over and over, each syllable floating through space like rings on a pond spreading endlessly outward.

“I’m right here,” I said. “In bed. Where else would I be at 3 a.m. on a school night.” But God – who surely should know where I was – continued to say, “Kathy, Kathy, where are you, Kathy?” Balto sat up at the end of my bed and stared at me, his nose and ears on red alert. This makes no sense, I thought. God thinks I’m lost and my dog thinks I’m crazy. I’m going to go back to sleep.

In the morning I opened my eyes and watched the puzzle pieces fall into place. God thinks I’m lost. I’m here – but not really here – because I don’t want to be. I just want to run away and never come back. When I was little, I could take my problems to my dad and he always helped me feel better. But now I can’t tell him everything. And I haven’t been praying to God at all – I’ve turned away from God too. So maybe God is right. Maybe I am lost.

I began to think about what had changed since I turned away from God. I had always been a good student, but now my grades were falling. I was spending my free time alone in my room instead of trying to make friends at my new school. And most of the time, when I wasn’t in Neverland, I felt miserable.

That night after the lights went out I prayed. “Dear God, please help me with this growing up stuff. It’s too hard and I can’t do it by myself. I’m sorry I forgot about you. I’m going to start praying every day again, I promise. Amen.” I fell asleep and in the morning my heart was lighter. It felt good to know I wasn’t alone and that maybe growing up would turn out all right.

Prayer: Dear God, whenever my life overwhelms me and I don’t know where to turn, you always find your little lost sheep and lead me gently home. Forgive me when I fall out of step and turn away from you. Be with me as I see the error of my ways and seek to make amends. Your unfailing love is the manna that restores me. Only with you in my heart can I grow and live.

-Kate Klaber

Scripture of the day:

So it is not the will of your father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost. (Matthew 18:14)

Thursday, April 2, 2009 - day 32

Everlasting Love

The greatest love story every read or told
Happened over two thousand years ago
God gave to us His only begotten Son
His name was Jesus, and He loved everyone

His love for us was so great and true
He gave His life for me and you
He died for us so brave and bold
He died to save our very souls

Other loves are like a summer flower
They blossom for awhile, then they are not there
But His love lingers as the ages roll on
His love continues long after the others are gone

[borrowed poem by Ellen Bailey]

Scripture of the day:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

Friday, April 3, 2009 – day 33

When the tomb looms large before our eyes, remind us, Lord, who we are:

We are children of the resurrection; the place of death will not hold us.

We are the painters of the rainbows; the shadow of death will not daunt us.

We are the breakers of loaves and fishes; the taste of death will not defile us.

We are the raisers of the dead; the power of death will not defy us.

We are the people of Pentecost; the spirit of death will not destroy us!

God is our refuge and our strength. We gather in the power and sure promise of resurrection

(adapted from Phyllis Cole and Everett Tilson, *Litanies and Other Prayers, Year C*, Abingdon Press: Nashville, 1991, pp. 173-174).

Scripture of the day:

I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that he can do no more, But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you fear him. (Luke 12:4-5)

Saturday, April 4, 2009 – day 34

The Road not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that, the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black,
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back,

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

From Robert Frost, Selected Poems, Penguin 1973

Scripture of the day:

...“Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” Jesus replied, “Foxes have holes and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.” Another disciple said to him, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father. But Jesus told him, “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own. dead.” (Matthew 8:19b-22)

Palm Sunday



Sixth Sunday of Lent – April 5, 2009
Lenten Oasis

Lent 6: Mark 11: 1-11; Psalm 22; Mark 15: 21-27
Prayer of Confession

God of all times and places, we confess that we would rather join the crowds than stand alone. We like safety and security while shrinking from the risk of involvement. We'll sing 'hosanna' when everyone else is doing so – but not when the hostile 'Good Friday' forces may hear us. We do not like to admit our lukewarm response to you, but neither do we want to be considered fanatics.

We believe Jesus Christ came in to the world to save sinners. We know that means us, not just other folk who do the obvious evils everyone knows about. We ask you to be patient with us, to help us understand our own guilt. Then pour out your forgiveness in such a way that we are forever transformed. **Amen.**



Holy Week

Monday before Easter, April 6, 2009 – day 35

LENT! (*borrowed words from J. M. Grier, Sr.*)

He spent hours trying to understand what it meant.
Lent. A time of soul searching & confession ...
Lent ... A time of searching out the mind of God ...
Lent ... Trading Romans 7 for Romans 8 ...

He tried giving up something he liked ... No Peace !
He tried fasting to improve his soul ... No Peace!
He tried fasting to lose weight ... No Peace!
He tried repentance ... Let God Heal ... Peace came!

He struggled with initial Salvation Principles ... Heartache!
He struggled with initial Salvation Theology ... Bitterness!
He struggled with initial Salvation ... Confusion!
He tried Trusting God Scripturally ... Peace Came!

He struggled and then discovered some truth!
We are saved by Grace through Faith !
New Birth in Christ is a beginning!
We surrender fleshly struggles for Spiritual Growth!

He contemplated deep thoughts.
St. Paul's struggles in Romans 7 is living in the flesh.
St. Paul's Victory in Romans 8 is living in the Spirit.
He thought: Lent is a prelude to personal resurrection!

He confessed his sin to God. Forgiveness came.
He repented and forsook his sins . Peace came.
He studied how to please God. Wisdom came.
He worshiped God in Spirit and Truth. Love came.

He was active in his church. He observed Lent.
He was active in his living. He prayed at home.
He was active openly outside the Church. He witnessed.
He studied his Bible. He grew.

He listened to God. He talked to God. Fellowship came.
He listened to people. He talked to people. Fellowship came.
He practiced Agape Love. Agape Love Blessed him.
Lent was followed by Easter. Obedience was followed by Life.

Was that you? Are you alive? If not,
Do you wish to be buried or resurrected?
Jesus is alive for evermore. He recommends Jesus.
Now the choice is up to you.

Holy Week

Tuesday before Easter, April 7, 2009 - day 36

"Easter Reflections from a Confirmand's Mother"

Life can be hard, can't it? Work, relationships, no work, no relationships, health, kids, no health, no kids. Well, we see a pattern here, don't we? And the pattern is one of opposites, which is exactly what Holy Week and Easter are to me.

We go through such highs and lows in that one week: the anticipation of Palm Sunday, the confusion of Maundy Thursday, the despair of Good Friday. And then the truth and joy of Easter Sunday.

And Easter, to me, is the hope and promise that has gotten me through rough patches in my life. We never can see the end when we're in the middle of something, but Holy Week offers us an example. God gives us hope that we can endure all things -- and that when we're done, there is more.

Peace be with us all.

Amen

[Mary Lou Snyed-Gillispie]

Scripture of the day:

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God...He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption... (1 Corinthians 1:18 & 18:30)

Holy Week

Wednesday before Easter, April 8, 2009 – Day 37

“What Easter Means to Me”

Easter for a lot of kids means eggs, chocolate rabbits, candy, hidden baskets, and a giant pink fluffy bunny that hands out sweet treats. Not for me. For me, Easter means the celebration that really started Christianity, Jesus’ resurrection and ascension. It means the day that everybody in my family goes to church, sings hymns and saying praise. I think that Easter is a day where all the Christians of the world get together in heart, thanking our Christ for the most noble and selfless deed in all of Christianity.

Submitted by Hanna Gillispie – Age 13

Seventh grader at Roxboro Middle School & Member of Redeemer 2009 Confirmation Class

Scripture of the day:

Let all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you. Let those who love your salvation say evermore, “God is great!” (Psalm 70:4)

Holy Week

Maundy Thursday, April 9, 2009 – Day 38

“What Easter Means to Me”

Easter for me is a celebration of Jesus' resurrection where people, go to church to rejoice and sing and talk about Jesus living and dying for us. When I was younger Easter just meant a large colorful bunny with a giant supply of candy. Now I know that it is not about receiving candy and different treats, it is remembering Jesus and all of the great things he has done for people. Easter is so much more than trying to get more candy than your brother and sister, it is Christians world wide joining together to celebrate Christ.

Submitted by Natalia Lenington – Age 12

Seventh grader at Roxboro Middle School & Member of Redeemer 2009 Confirmation Class

Scripture of the day:

The he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him...So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. (John 13:5 & 13:-14-17)

Holy Week

Good Friday, April 10, 2009 - Day 39

“What Good Friday Means to Me”

The arrival of Easter has always been important to me, not only in a religious way, but in a personal way too. I was born on Good Friday making the day extra special to my whole family. Whenever someone mentions Easter or Good Friday or even Lent, I can't help but to remember my birthday and all the fantastic memories that come with it. East of course still means getting together with family and going to church, but to me its brings another joy, my birthday!

Submitted by Cate Terez – Age 13

Seventh grader at Hathaway Brown School & Member of Redeemer 2009 Confirmation Class

Scripture of the day:

Jesus answered, “I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret”....They cried out, “Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!” (John 18:20 & 15a)

Holy Week

Holy Saturday, April 11, 2009 – Day 40

“An Easter Poem to Share”

During ancient times, Easter poems were always sung as hymns. In the second century AD, a priest by the name of Melito of Sardes praised the Resurrection by saying:

“Trembling for joy cries all creation;
What is this mystery, so great and new?
The Lord has risen from among the dead,
And Death itself He crushed with valiant foot.
Behold the cruel tyrant bound and chained,
And man made free by Him who rose”

*Submitted by Victoria Montgomery – Age 12
Sixth Grader at St. Clare School & Member of Redeemer 2009 Confirmation Class*

Scripture of the day:

“...Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations,...” (Luke 24:45b-47)

**HALLEUJAH!
HE IS RISEN
EASTER SUNDAY
April 12, 2009**



I serve a risen Savior, He's in the world today;
I know that He is living whatever men may say;
I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer,
And just the time I need Him, He's always near.

Chorus

He lives, He lives,
Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me
Along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives,
Salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart.

In all the world around me I see His loving care,
And tho' my heart grows weary I never will despair;
I know that He is leading thro' all the stormy blast,
The day of His appearing will come at last.

Chorus

He lives, He lives,
Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me
Along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives,
Salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart.

Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian, lift up your voice and sing
Eternal hallelujahs to Jesus Christ the King!
The hope of all who seek Him, the help of all who find,
None other is so loving, so good and kind.

Chorus

He lives, He lives,
Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me
Along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives,
Salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart.