

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2 - ASH WEDNESDAY

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

“Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. ²“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁶“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- What does prayer look and feel like for you?
- Have you had a time or place that moved you to pray? What was it about that time/place?
- Is there someone you've met who embodies humility and generosity? What makes them so?
- What does it mean to fast or give alms? What does this look like in our day?
- What are the “treasures in heaven” we should be storing up now?
- Can you think of something that you tried to save that went bad or didn't last? Why didn't it last?

THURSDAY, MARCH 3

1 John 1:3-10

³We declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

⁵This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; ⁷but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- What does it mean for our “joy to be made complete”?
- What does it mean to walk in light? Darkness? When have you experienced coming out of darkness into light?
- We used to commonly use the final section of scripture as an introduction to the confession and forgiveness. What does this mean? What does it say about the importance of confession and honesty? How does it free us?

FRIDAY, MARCH 4

Psalm 25:1-10

- ¹ To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
- ² O my God, in you I trust;
do not let me be put to shame;
do not let my enemies exult over me.
- ³ Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.
- ⁴ Make me to know your ways, O Lord;
teach me your paths.
- ⁵ Lead me in your truth, and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all day long.
- ⁶ Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love,
for they have been from of old.
- ⁷ Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
according to your steadfast love remember me,
for your goodness' sake, O Lord!
- ⁸ Good and upright is the Lord;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.
- ⁹ He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way.
- ¹⁰ All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- The psalmist notes a lot of ways he hopes God will follow through on the trust placed in God. What do you hope God will follow through with?
- What ways, paths, and truth of God do you wish God would teach you? What does it mean that the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness? What has God led you or someone else down these paths?
- What does it mean to ask God to remember His mercy and forget the sins of our “youth”? Does God have a hard time remembering or forgetting? Has there ever been a time you wanted God to remember His mercy, or forget your sins?

SATURDAY, MARCH 5

Matthew 9:2-13

²And just then some people were carrying a paralyzed man lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.” ³Then some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.” ⁴But Jesus, perceiving their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? ⁵For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and walk’? ⁶But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” —he then said to the paralytic— ‘stand up, take your bed and go to your home.’ ⁷And he stood up and went to his home. ⁸When the crowds saw it, they were filled with awe, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to human beings.

⁹As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he got up and followed him. ¹⁰And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. ¹¹When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” ¹²But when he heard this, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.”

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- Have you ever been moved by the words, “Your sins are forgiven,” spoken to you?
- How have you been healed of paralysis or disability? Was it more than just physical paralysis or disability?
- What does it mean, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice”? How have you learned this?
- What does it mean, “I have come to call not the righteous but sinners”?
- When have friends or family helped you get the healing you need?

SUNDAY, MARCH 6

Genesis 9:8-17

⁸Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹“As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, ¹⁰and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. ¹¹I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

¹²God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” ¹⁷God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- What does it mean that God is establishing His covenant? Why is it with all the animals, too? What covenants have you made with people? What makes them hard to fulfill?
- What does the rainbow signify to you? Is it just beautiful? Is it God's weapon (bow and arrow) hung up?
- Do you think God has a hard time remembering to be merciful? Do we?
- When have you needed reassurance that things will turn out okay, and received that assurance?

MONDAY, MARCH 7

Ephesians 2:1-10

You were dead through the trespasses and sins ²in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. ³All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. ⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ⁵even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— ⁹not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- What does it mean to be dead through trespasses and sins? When have you felt lifeless because of something you did or a way you were living? What changed things?
- What does it mean that we are saved by grace as a gift from God? Saved from what? What is grace?
- What has God made you to be? What good works has God prepared to be your way of life? How have you seen the actions of one person shape another? How did your parents' actions shape you?
- When have you been tempted to brag about your good deeds, only to be reminded that something bigger is happening, and you're privileged to be a part of it?

TUESDAY, MARCH 8

1 Peter 3:8-18a

⁸Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. ⁹Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing. ¹⁰For “Those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit; ¹¹let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it. ¹²For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” ¹³Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? ¹⁴But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, ¹⁵but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; ¹⁶yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. ¹⁷For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God’s will, than to suffer for doing evil.

¹⁸For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit,

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- Have you witnessed evil or abuse repaid with evil and abuse? What was the result? Have you seen it repaid with blessing? What was the result?
- How does turning from evil and seeking peace help us “see good days”?
- What does unity of the spirit, sympathy, love, a tender heart, a humble mind, gentleness, reverence, or a clear conscience look like? Would any one of these describe another’s action towards you (maybe even at a time when you did evil or abuse to them)?
- When you’ve been filled with bitterness, frustration, or anger, what did God (or God through someone else) offer you that helped you set those things aside (at least for the moment)?

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9

Genesis 15:1-6, 12-18

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, “Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.”

²But Abram said, “O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” ³And Abram said, “You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.” ⁴But the word of the Lord came to him, “This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir.” ⁵He brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” ⁶And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.

¹²As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him. ¹³Then the Lord said to Abram, “Know this for certain, that your offspring shall be aliens in a land that is not theirs, and shall be slaves there, and they shall be oppressed for four hundred years; ¹⁴but I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵As for yourself, you shall go to your ancestors in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶And they shall come back here in the fourth generation; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

¹⁷When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. ¹⁸On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- Why would God use the stars to describe God's blessing? What do you think of when you look at the stars?
- The middle section demonstrates the blessing will not come by an easy road. Have you had a rocky road to blessing?
- Why would offspring be so important to Abram? What is the legacy or blessing you hope to leave for others? What did your parents or ancestors (even early settlers) leave for you?
- What does God offer you to leave you feeling fulfilled in life?

THURSDAY, MARCH 10

Genesis 16:1-6

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children. She had an Egyptian slave-girl whose name was Hagar, ²and Sarai said to Abram, "You see that the Lord has prevented me from bearing children; go in to my slave-girl; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. ³So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her slave-girl, and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife.

⁴He went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress. ⁵Then Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my slave-girl to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the Lord judge between you and me!" ⁶But Abram said to Sarai, "Your slave-girl is in your power; do to her as you please." Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she ran away from her.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- How does Sarai and Abram trying to leverage God's blessing and make it happen sooner complicate things? When have you made a mess by trying to rush things?
- Why would Sarai be jealous and deal harshly with Hagar? When have your actions caused you regret or jealousy later?
- What do you start doing when you get impatient? What helps you be more patient?

FRIDAY, MARCH 11

Genesis 21:1-7

The Lord dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as he had promised. ²Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. ³Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him. ⁴And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. ⁵Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. ⁶Now Sarah said, “God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me.” ⁷And she said, “Who would ever have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- How do you think Sarah felt to bear a son at such an old age? Would you have given up? What promises or dreams did you give up on in life, only to be surprised with it's fulfillment (or the fulfillment of a better gift)?
- Why did Sarah laugh? What kind of laughter was it? When has God made you laugh, or giddy with joy? Who brought you that laughter on behalf of God?
- How have you chosen the names of your children, or how was your name chosen? What is the significance behind it, and what does it have to do with God's action in your life?

SATURDAY, MARCH 12

Mark 8:27-30

²⁷Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” ²⁸And they answered him, “John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” ²⁹He asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Messiah.” ³⁰And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- Who do *you* say that God is? Jesus is?
- Who would God say that *you* are?
- What does it mean that Jesus is the Messiah (the Anointed One)? Anointed or chosen for what exactly?
- Why is the world so confused about who God is? How can we know better? Did you ever experience a time when God's identity became so much more clear or real to you?
- Why would Jesus order them not to tell anyone before his death and resurrection? Why weren't they ready yet?

SUNDAY, MARCH 13

Mark 8:31-38

³¹Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³²He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

³⁴He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- Why would Peter object to what Jesus says? And why did Jesus call him Satan? What human things was Peter thinking about?
- What does it mean to deny yourself and take up your cross? How can we do this today? How have you seen others sacrifice themselves for others?
- Does God really want us to suffer and be miserable? When have you seen God bring good out of suffering?
- What does it mean that those who want to save their lives will lost it, and those who lose their lives for Jesus' sake will save it? When have you lost or given up on something, only to receive something more meaningful in its place?

MONDAY, MARCH 14

Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. ³The tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” ⁴But he answered, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” ⁵Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’” ⁷Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” ⁸Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; ⁹and he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” ¹⁰Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! for it is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’” ¹¹Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- Why would Jesus be tempted? Does it bring you comfort that Jesus is tempted, too? How does he resist temptation?
- What is your greatest temptation? How do you resist? Why might God *want* you to resist that particular temptation?
- What do you think about the devil's temptations? What are they all about?
- What do you think about the devil quoting scripture (verse 6)?

TUESDAY, MARCH 15

Hebrews 11:1-3, 13-19

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ²Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. ³By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible. ¹³All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, ¹⁴for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them. ¹⁷By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac. He who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only son, ¹⁸of whom he had been told, “It is through Isaac that descendants shall be named for you.” ¹⁹He considered the fact that God is able even to raise someone from the dead—and figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- What is faith? How is that different that trusting only what you've learned and seen? How do those things you've learned and seen inform what you hope for and have not seen?
- What does it mean that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible. Go back and read the creation account in Genesis 1.
- Have you ever yearned to return home?
- What has God brought back to life for you?

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16

Romans 3:21-31

²¹But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, ²²the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, ²³since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; ²⁴they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; ²⁶it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus. ²⁷Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. By what law? By that of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law. ²⁹Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, ³⁰since God is one; and he will justify the circumcised on the ground of faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. ³¹Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- If all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, why even try to be better?
- What is grace? What is redemption? When have you experienced them in your life?
- If we are justified by grace, why not just do whatever we want (why not just sin and expect God to forgive us)? Have you ever acted first, knowing you'd need to seek forgiveness later? How did that work out for you?
- What is "justification?"
- Who do we like to believe is beyond the grace of God? Why would God have grace on those we have a hard time loving?

THURSDAY, MARCH 16

1 Peter 2:4-10

⁴Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and ⁵like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶For it stands in scripture: "See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." ⁷To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner," ⁸and "A stone that makes them stumble, and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. ⁹But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- Have you ever been tempted to reject God? How has that rejection strengthened you?
- Do you know anything about cornerstones or buildings? How important is the foundation? What does that say about God?
- What does it mean to be "called out of darkness into marvelous light"? What mighty acts have done this?
- When have you ever been on shaky ground? How might God have contributed to the stability you eventually found?

FRIDAY, MARCH 18

Exodus 19:1-9a

On the third new moon after the Israelites had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day, they came into the wilderness of Sinai. ²They had journeyed from Rephidim, entered the wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness; Israel camped there in front of the mountain. ³Then Moses went up to God; the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the Israelites: ⁴You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. ⁵Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, ⁶but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites.” ⁷So Moses came, summoned the elders of the people, and set before them all these words that the Lord had commanded him. ⁸The people all answered as one: “Everything that the Lord has spoken we will do.” Moses reported the words of the people to the Lord.

⁹Then the Lord said to Moses, “I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, in order that the people may hear when I speak with you and so trust you ever after.”

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- When have you felt lost, exhausted, wandering, thirsty? Did you ever think it would end? What kept you going? How was God present?
- How does God's past action give us strength and quench our thirst going forward?
- Do you doubt God's promise to keep you going sometimes? Why or why not?
- What has it been hard for you to follow the directions of someone else? Why did we learn to always follow directions as kids? What was the benefit? How good are we at that as adults?

SATURDAY, MARCH 19

Exodus 20:1-17

Then God spoke all these words: ²I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; ³you shall have no other gods before me. ⁴You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, ⁶but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments. ⁷You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name. ⁸Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor and do all your work. ¹⁰But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. ¹¹For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it. ¹²Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. ¹³You shall not murder. ¹⁴You shall not commit adultery. ¹⁵You shall not steal. ¹⁶You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. ¹⁷You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- What impact have the 10 Commandments had on your life? Do you remember anything special from learning them in Sunday school or confirmation?
- Is there something in the scripture that you don't remember as being part of the Commandments?
- Why does God give the Commandments?
- What do you remember learning about the Commandments in confirmation or Sunday school as a kid? How has that shaped your actions as an adult?

SUNDAY, MARCH 20

John 2:13-22

¹³The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." ¹⁸The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" ¹⁹Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" ²¹But he was speaking of the temple of his body. ²²After 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.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- What is a modern equivalent of what is happening in the temple (not selling something at church, but people taking advantage of other well-intentioned people)?
- How does it make you feel to see Jesus behaving this way? Why do you think he was so passionate about it?
- What has prompted similar passion for you? When have you felt "righteous anger?" How did you handle it compared to Jesus?
- What does Jesus mean about the temple of his body being destroyed?

MONDAY, MARCH 21

Psalm 19

¹The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

²Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.

³There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard;

⁴yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,

⁵which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy, and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

⁶Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them; and nothing is hid from its heat.

⁷The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple;

⁸the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eyes;

⁹the fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

¹⁰More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb.

¹¹Moreover by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

¹²But who can detect their errors? Clear me from hidden faults.

¹³Keep back your servant also from the insolent; do not let them have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.

¹⁴Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- Have you ever had an experienced when a beautiful part of creation (sunset, beach, etc.) seemed to be proclaiming God's goodness to you?
- What are some of the hardest rules (precepts) you've had to follow? Some of the most important? What "rules" do you live by? How are these God's will?
- Have you ever had an experience when following the rules saved you from some kind of trouble?
- What does it mean to you for your words and thoughts to be acceptable to God?

TUESDAY, MARCH 22

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

¹⁸For 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. ¹⁹For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.” ²⁰Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. ²²For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- What is the message of the cross? Why is it foolishness to some, and salvation to others?
- When have you thought yourself rather wise or clever, only to be humbled by realizing you were totally wrong? Though a humbling experience, were you better off with the truth?
- What does it mean to “proclaim Christ crucified”? What difference does Christ’s death make in your life?

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23

Isaiah 58:1-12

Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. ²Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God.

³“Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?” Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. ⁴Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. ⁵Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? ⁶Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? ⁷Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

⁸Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. ⁹Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, ¹⁰if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. ¹¹The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. ¹²Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- Do you tend to shout out without holding back, or are you more shy? Why is that? What kind of things manage to get you excited and willing to tell everyone? Where is God in that?
- Why does doing justice, giving freedom, feeding and housing others speak more about your faith than prayers, church attendance, and offerings? When have you “loosed the bonds of injustice, undone the thongs of the yoke, let the oppressed go free, broken every yoke, shared your bread with the hungry, brought the homeless poor into your house; covered the naked, and not to hid yourself from your own kin? When did someone do it for you?
- What is God's promise here? What is your part in its fulfillment?
- Why is it tempting to point the finger and speak evil? How does it impede your ability to see and serve God?

THURSDAY, MARCH 24

Ephesians 1:3-6

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- What is a “blessing”? What does it mean to be blessed? How can you bless others? How can you bless God?
- When have you experienced great blessing? What was it about that experience that was unique and memorable? What impact did that blessing have on your life?
- What is your experience of adoption? How does that lend itself to understanding God’s love?
- What is God’s “good pleasure”?

FRIDAY, MARCH 25

Ephesians 1:7-14

⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, ¹²so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; ¹⁴this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- What is God's will (set forth in Christ)? What is God willing to do to accomplish it?
- What does it mean to be "gathered up" by God? Have you ever been gathered up before? When have you gathered or collected something yourself? Why did you do it? What was the process like? How did it feel?
- What does it mean to live for the praise of God's glory?
- What is our inheritance from God in Christ? How have you received part of that inheritance already? What more do you look forward to receiving? What does God have to give up for you to receive those things?

SATURDAY, MARCH 26

John 3:1-13

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ²He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.” ³Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” ⁴Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” ⁵Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ ⁸The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” ⁹Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” ¹⁰Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? ¹¹“Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- Have you ever had questions like Nicodemus? How would you feel about the answer Jesus gives him, or how have you felt about some of the answers you feel God has (or has not) given to your questions?
- What is something you didn't believe was possible that was later proven to be true?
- What is your experience of the wind? When have you been trapped in a windstorm, or harnessed the wind to accomplish something? How is it like the Spirit of God?

SUNDAY, MARCH 27

John 3:14-21

¹⁴And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. ¹⁷“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- What comes to your mind when you hear John 3:16? When did you first learn it, and why? What does it mean to you?
- Are you familiar with John 3:17? How does it help you understand John 3:16?
- What is your experience of darkness and light? Were (or are) you afraid of the dark? Why? When do you prefer the dark? When do you prefer the light?
- When have you been grateful for an abundance of light? When do you seek stronger light?

MONDAY, MARCH 28

Psalm 107:1-16

¹O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.

²Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, those he redeemed from trouble

³and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

⁴Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to an inhabited town;

⁵hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them.

⁶Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress;

⁷he led them by a straight way, until they reached an inhabited town.

⁸Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wonderful works to humankind.

⁹For he satisfies the thirsty, and the hungry he fills with good things.

¹⁰Some sat in darkness and in gloom, prisoners in misery and in irons,

¹¹for they had rebelled against the words of God, and spurned the counsel of the Most High.

¹²Their hearts were bowed down with hard labor; they fell down, with no one to help.

¹³Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress;

¹⁴he brought them out of darkness and gloom, and broke their bonds asunder.

¹⁵Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wonderful works to humankind.

¹⁶For he shatters the doors of bronze, and cuts in two the bars of iron.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- What is it like when your family or friends gather together? Is it different when some of them have been distant? How does this help you think about God's gatherings?
- When have you cried out to God in distress? When and how did your relief come? What did it feel like?
- What is *steadfast* love? How does it differ from other love? What or who epitomizes steadfastness to you?
- What's your favorite way to give thanks to God? What impact does your expression of gratitude have on God? On you?

TUESDAY, MARCH 29

Numbers 20:1-13

The Israelites, the whole congregation, came into the wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in Kadesh. Miriam died there, and was buried there. ²Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses and against Aaron. ³The people quarreled with Moses and said, “Would that we had died when our kindred died before the Lord! ⁴Why have you brought the assembly of the Lord into this wilderness for us and our livestock to die here? ⁵Why have you brought us up out of Egypt, to bring us to this wretched place? It is no place for grain, or figs, or vines, or pomegranates; and there is no water to drink.” ⁶Then Moses and Aaron went away from the assembly to the entrance of the tent of meeting; they fell on their faces, and the glory of the Lord appeared to them. ⁷The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ⁸Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and your brother Aaron, and command the rock before their eyes to yield its water. Thus you shall bring water out of the rock for them; thus you shall provide drink for the congregation and their livestock. ⁹So Moses took the staff from before the Lord, as he had commanded him. ¹⁰Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said to them, “Listen, you rebels, shall we bring water for you out of this rock?” ¹¹Then Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with his staff; water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their livestock drank. ¹²But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not trust in me, to show my holiness before the eyes of the Israelites, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them.” ¹³These are the waters of Meribah, where the people of Israel quarreled with the Lord, and by which he showed his holiness.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- How do you feel about the Israelites' complaining? Is it justified?
- Have you ever been really thirsty? Dehydrated? How does it make you feel or act? What are you willing to do for water in that moment? What does that first drink taste like?
- How do you think the people felt when they first saw that flowing water? What do you think it tasted like?
- Why do you think the Israelites' lack of trust in God means that they won't make it into the promised land? Have you ever missed out on something good because you didn't trust someone?
- When have you looked back wistfully to the “good ol' days,” even when they weren't all that good? Why is that? What was happening in your life at the time that made you so uncomfortable?

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30

Deuteronomy 30:11-20

¹¹ Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away. ¹² It is not in heaven, that you should say, “Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?” ¹³ Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, “Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?” ¹⁴ No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe.

¹⁵ See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. ¹⁶ If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. ¹⁷ But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, ²⁰ loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- Are God's expectations that hard for us to follow? Why or why not? What rules are hard to follow? Which ones are easy? What makes them hard or easy?
- When have you been given a life-altering choice to make? Which choice did you make? Why?
- What does this passage say following God's commands is like? What other expectations like them (written or unwritten) have you had to follow in life?
- What does God mean, “Choose life.” When has God called you to choose life over a different path you were on that was killing you?

THURSDAY, MARCH 31

Isaiah 30:15-18

¹⁵For thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength. But you refused ¹⁶and said, “No! We will flee upon horses”— therefore you shall flee! and, “We will ride upon swift steeds”— therefore your pursuers shall be swift! ¹⁷A thousand shall flee at the threat of one, at the threat of five you shall flee, until you are left like a flagstaff on the top of a mountain, like a signal on a hill.

¹⁸Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show mercy to you. For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- How does rest bring salvation? Think about why God instituted the Sabbath. Have things gone smoother, or have you had better ideas after resting from working too hard?
- When have you gotten caught up in working, that you didn't take the rest you needed? What's been the impact on you of overworking? What prompted you to get rest? Why is rest important to human bodies, minds, and spirits, and why should God care if we take it?
- What activity (or lack of activity) brings you the best renewal (physically, emotionally, spiritually)?
- How are quietness and trust strengths? What do they mean? Are they passiveness, or something more?
- We're used to feeling like we wait on God. Have you ever considered that God is being patient with you? What might God need to wait for you to do?

FRIDAY, APRIL 1

Psalm 51:1-12

¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

²Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

³For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

⁴Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment.

⁵Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.

⁶You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

⁷Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

⁸Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.

⁹Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

¹⁰Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

¹¹Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.

¹²Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- When do you feel most like crying out, “Have mercy”? What do you think God feels about your sins? How powerful is guilt and shame? How has it sucked joy out of your life until you were able to move past it?
- Have you ever been really dirty or smelly, and wanted nothing more than getting clean? What was it like sitting in the filth? How did it feel to get clean? How does this experience help you understand this passage better?
- What might a “new and right spirit” be like?

SATURDAY, APRIL 2

John 12:1-11

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ²There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. ³Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, ⁵"Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" ⁶(He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) ⁷Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me." ⁹When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came not only because of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ¹⁰So the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death as well, ¹¹since it was on account of him that many of the Jews were deserting and were believing in Jesus.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- What would it be like having dinner with the guy who raised you (or your brother) from the dead? How would you deal with the fame of being risen from the dead (verse 9)? How would you deal with the death threats (verse 10)?
- Why do you think Mary took perfume and anointed Jesus' feet? Why would this be so scandalous to others? Why especially would it bother Judas?
- Can you think of a time when you wanted to lavish such praise and attention on someone? Has someone lavished it on you? Why? How did it feel? What did doing it accomplish?
- Call to mind the best smell you can think of. What effect does it have on you? Why?

SUNDAY, APRIL 3

John 12:20-33

²⁰Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” ²²Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

²⁷“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- Do you have knowledge of gardening or farming that helps you understand Jesus' words? How much does one seed yield?
- What does it mean, “Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it”? Does God really want us to hate our lives? When have you gained something new when you gave up something you thought you needed?
- What do you think it means that Jesus' soul is troubled? Why doesn't he give into that feeling? When have you or someone you know been deeply troubled? How did you face it? How did your perseverance give glory to God?

MONDAY, APRIL 4

Jeremiah 31:31-34

³¹The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. ³³But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- Have you ever been the victim of a broken covenant, promise, or contract (or been the one to break it yourself)? What was the fallout for you? For the one who broke it? How did you respond to them after it was broken?
- What is it like to have the law of God written on your heart? What has someone (a parent, grandparent, teacher, pastor, etc.) taught you that has always stuck with you as a rule by which to live?
- What does it mean that we shall “all know the Lord”? How do you know about God? Has anyone ever taught you about God without saying anything (such as in their way of living)?
- How could God forget our sins? What does that mean?

TUESDAY, APRIL 5

Psalm 118

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever!

Let Israel say, "His steadfast love endures forever."

Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord.

This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it.

I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Save us, we beseech you, O Lord! O Lord, we beseech you, give us success!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord.

The Lord is God, and he has given us light. Bind the festal procession with branches, up to the horns of the altar.

You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God, I will extol you.

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- What is steadfast love? What are the gates of righteousness? Do you have a memorable experience involving a gate or door that might shed light on this?
- What reason do you have to give thanks to God?
- Have you ever been rejected or the last picked, only to become very important? Do you know of an athlete like that?
- Do you know anything about building or construction to speak about foundations and cornerstones?
- What does it mean, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord?"

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6

Philippians 2:1-11

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, ²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, ⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, ⁸he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- What does it mean to be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind? Have you ever felt that in sync with anyone before? Does it mean agreeing on everything?
- When has someone looked out for your interests above their own? What makes this so hard to do yourself? When is it easy?
- Why would Jesus humbling himself to servanthood and sacrifice make him worthy of praise? Is there anyone else you admire for their humility? What is it about them that you admire?

THURSDAY, APRIL 7

Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- How do you think Mary felt when the angel appeared? How would you feel? Have you ever been surprised by such good and challenging news?
- Why do you think Mary found favor with God? What do you think God was looking for in a mother for Jesus? Why don't you think God chose someone more important?
- Have you ever questioned whether what you're being asked to do is impossible? Have you ever been surprised by what you were able to accomplish with the power of God working in you?
- Would you have been able to respond with the same agreeableness as Mary? Or would you have had more questions and tried to talk God out of it? Why do you think Mary went along with it, even though she might have been scared and confused, and uncertain of her ability to do well with it?

FRIDAY, APRIL 8

Philippians 2:12-18

¹²Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

¹⁴Do all things without murmuring and arguing, ¹⁵so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world. ¹⁶It is by your holding fast to the word of life that I can boast on the day of Christ that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. ¹⁷But even if I am being poured out as a libation over the sacrifice and the offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you—¹⁸and in the same way you also must be glad and rejoice with me.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- What does it mean to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling?
- What is God's good pleasure for you? When has that become clear to you? Has it been easy or hard to will and work for?
- How has God worked in you? Has God ever given you the will and the talents to accomplish something you didn't think you could do? Have you ever surprised yourself or others by something you got into?
- What do you tend to murmur and argue about? Why? What is its impact on what you have to do? Have you ever known someone more positive and upbeat than you who helped you get through something you were tempted to murmur about?

SATURDAY, APRIL 9

Mark 10:32-34, 46-52

³²They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them what was to happen to him, ³³saying, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles; ³⁴they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise again.” ⁴⁶They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. ⁴⁷When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁸Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁹Jesus stood still and said, “Call him here.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart; get up, he is calling you.” ⁵⁰So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹Then Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said to him, “My teacher, let me see again.” ⁵²Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- What's the longest trip you've had to go on? Have you ever been traveling someplace you didn't want to go? What helped you along the way?
- If Jesus so plainly told the disciples everything that was going to happen to him, why do you think they didn't get it later on when it actually happened? Have you ever tuned out what someone else had to say because you didn't want to hear it? Has anyone ever tuned you out for the same reason?
- If Jesus were to ask you, “What do you want me to do for you?” how would you respond?
- What do you think about miraculous healings like this? Why don't we have them today?
- When have you experienced healing (physically, emotionally, spiritually)? What helped make you well? How was God involved in that?

SUNDAY, APRIL 10 - PALM SUNDAY

Mark 11:1-11

When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples ²and said to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. ³If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.’” ⁴They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, ⁵some of the bystanders said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” ⁶They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. ⁷Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. ⁸Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. ⁹Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

“Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

¹⁰Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

¹¹Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- Have you ever considered what the disciples fetching the colt or the owner of the colt were thinking? Why go along with it?
- Why would people honor Jesus in this way? How would we honor Jesus if he were to walk down our street? Why?
- What memories do you have of Palm Sunday? Any traditions you remember that added meaning for you?
- “Hosanna” means, “Lord, save us.” How does that open up what people are looking or hoping for? What you are looking for from God?
- How does being a part of Hosanna, and our rituals make this passage deeper or more meaningful for you? How is this one event about more than just that one event?

MONDAY, APRIL 11 - MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK

Isaiah 42:1-9

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. ²He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; ³a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. ⁴He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

⁵Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: ⁶I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, ⁷to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. ⁸I am the Lord, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols. ⁹See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- How would you feel if “God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it” were to address you? Why does God deserve glory and honor?
- What is the purpose of God recounting all the things God has done?
Recount some of the things God has done for you.
- What does it mean to be a “light to the nations”? When have you seen people be a light to the nations? When have you seen people set aside boundaries or differences and competition to lift up others?
- What new things are God making to spring forth in your life? In the world?

TUESDAY, APRIL 12 - TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK

Isaiah 50:4-9a

The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens— wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty? All of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- Reflect on your experience of a great teacher, or your experience as a teacher.
- Have you ever been sustained in your weariness by a single word? What was the word? What actions accompanied it?
- When have you been abused or ridiculed for an unpopular stand that you took? What helped you stay strong?
- Have you ever been calm in the face of adversaries, or known someone else who was? What helped them stand strong? How does God help you stand strong?

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13 - WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK

Hebrews 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, ²looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. ³Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- Who is among the great cloud of witnesses for you?
- What weighs on you? What clings too close? How do you lay those things aside?
- If you've ever been a runner or played a sport that requires endurance, what does it mean to you to persevere?
- When are you tempted to grow weary or lose heart? How does God sustain you?

THURSDAY, APRIL 14 - MAUNDY THURSDAY

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ²The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, ⁴got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. ⁵Then 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. ⁶He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" ⁷Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." ⁸Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." ⁹Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." ¹¹For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean." ¹²After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. ¹⁴So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. ¹⁷If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

³¹When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³²If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. ³³Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' ³⁴I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- How would you have felt if Jesus tried to wash your feet? How would you have reacted? Do you think you would have understood what he was doing? Why did he do it?
- What do you think Jesus means when he says, "you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example"? What is God calling you to do? How can you serve like him? How can serving be a blessing? Think of an experience of serving that blessed you.
- What does Jesus mean when he says, "Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another"? How has he loved us? How do you show love? What acts of love mean the most to you?
- Are Christians known for their love? How?

FRIDAY, APRIL 15 - GOOD FRIDAY

John 19:16-30

¹⁶Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus; ¹⁷and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. ¹⁸There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them.

¹⁹Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." ²⁰Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. ²¹Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" ²²Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written." ²³When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. ²⁴So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it." This was to fulfill what the scripture says, "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots." ²⁵And that is what the soldiers did. Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." ²⁷Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home. ²⁸After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty." ²⁹A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. ³⁰When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- Imagine following Jesus to the cross. What emotions would have crossed your mind? What emotions do you think crossed Jesus' mind?
- Do you think of God as a king? How is Jesus similar or different than a king?
- What do you make of the exchange between Jesus and his mother? What arrangements do we tend to make at (or in preparation for) death?
- Have you ever been present at the death of someone? What was it like for you? For them? How was God present in that gut-wrenching moment?

SATURDAY, APRIL 16 - VIGIL OF EASTER

John 18:15-27

¹⁵Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, ¹⁶but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. ¹⁷The woman said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." ¹⁸Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself. ¹⁹Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. ²⁰Jesus 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. ²¹Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said." ²²When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" ²³Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" ²⁴Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. ²⁵Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, "You are not also one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." ²⁶One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" ²⁷Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- When have you felt like you betrayed God, a family member, or a friend? Have you ever felt betrayed by one of them? What do you think was the reason for betrayal?
- How would you answer if someone came up to you and asked if you were a disciple of Jesus? What connotation does being a disciple have today? Why is that?
- Have you ever stood on trial? What was it like? How do you feel like Jesus handled it?
- Why might people be conspiring against Jesus? Why was he so threatening? Are there things that Jesus says or does that challenge or threaten your way of life? That make you frustrated or ashamed? If so, how do we handle those emotions?

SUNDAY, APRIL 17 - EASTER

Romans 6:3-11

³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For whoever has died is freed from sin. ⁸But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Questions for consideration - *Don't feel like you have to answer these, or that you can't write one something totally different. They are here to help you if you feel stuck . . .*

- What does it mean to be baptized into Jesus' death? What does it mean to you to be raised from the dead like him? What does baptism mean to you? What is your experience of baptism (of children, god-children, etc.)?
- What does resurrection and new life look and feel like to you still in *this* life?
- Do you consider yourself dead to sin? Alive to Christ? What does this mean?
- How does this give you hope for making it through your daily struggles?
- How has the promise of resurrection brought you comfort or hope in your times of grief and loss? Is it just hope for heaven some day, or is there something more to it for you?